

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS II.

AS I KNEW HIM

MAJOR-GENERAL
SIR JOHN HANBURY WILLIAMS, K.C.B.

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The Emperor talking to Sir John Hanbury Williams.

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BY

MAJOR-GENERAL

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TO

MY WIFE

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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE drawn up this sketch of the late Emperor Nicholas and of some of the persons and events connected with him partly in diary form because as such it gives the true impressions which I gathered from time to time during the years of war which I spent with the General Headquarters of the armies in Russia.

I probably saw him oftener and knew him more intimately than most others, outside his immediate 'entourage,' during the period of his command in the field, when his long absences from the capital made it also necessary for me to be the intermediary on other than purely military matters.

When I was suddenly dispatched to Russia on that early day in August 1914 I had but a very sketchy idea of the country and its people. Interest, however, I had from the history of my ancestor who was ambassador there and a friend of the great Empress Catherine. On my arrival I found that there was still around one some of that halo of

mystery which was attached to the days when she addressed her letters to him as 'Madame' and he to her as 'Monsieur.'

I expected to find secrecy and difficulties at every corner, and an Imperial family weighed down with care, anxieties and the fear of an anarchist's bomb or an assassin's knife.

My acquaintance with the Emperor, Empress and their children revealed quite another aspect. It was that of an apparently happy, and certainly a devoted, family. Revolution, too, was a word so commonly used in the country, and the prophets of it so numerous, that possibly familiarity bred contempt, one became too sanguine, and assured that anyhow till the war was ended the country would hold together.

With a pre-war population of about 83,000,000, covering an area of 8,500,000 square miles, it was possibly but little wonder that people talked of 'the Russian steam-roller.'

The popularity and enthusiasm evinced in favour of the Allies' cause—in marked distinction to the case of the previous war (against Japan)—gave one the hope that Russia had now found herself in a position

to get through the great ordeal with a success which would not only bring glory on herself, but a closer and more friendly attitude towards those of the Allies with whom the ties of friendship had not hitherto been very marked.

The granting of a Duma or Parliament had been a step in the right direction, and though it was so tied in its powers that it had become very little of a 'free institution,' the hope existed of an improvement in that direction, approaching more nearly to similar institutions elsewhere.

The stories of the drink scourge which had militated against the success of the Russian armies in the war with Japan were to be refuted in this campaign by the strong and stern measures taken, at great risk by the Emperor, for the abolition of vodka. The success of this measure was quickly proved, not only by the unfailing sobriety of the soldiers, but by the increase of funds in the savings banks of the peasants, who formed the great nucleus of the armies.

There were signs, too, that Poland, upon which unfortunate country were to fall some of the heaviest blows of the war, was to receive anyhow a form of self-government,

which she had long awaited, and would bring her people into a more friendly relationship with Russia, thus deciding them on a strong and united action against the enemy at her gates.

The Minister for War at the time of the ultimatums had issued statements which gave reason to the general public to suppose that the armies were ready up to 'the last button on their gaiters.'

When, therefore, the Grand Duke Nicholas took the field as Commander-in-Chief the omens were good to people in general.

True, there was talk of pro-Germanism and of Court intrigue—but the spirit generally of the nation at large was one of enthusiastic optimism. It was almost, if one may use such a false expression, the idea of a short war and a merry one.

The unselfish action of the Grand Duke to help the cause of the Allies at grave risks to his own army by his attacks on the north-west front made the Russians still more popular.

But suddenly and as a complete surprise, except to those 'in the know,' came the story of shortness of munitions, not entirely owing to the immense expenditure—which

in this war came as a surprise also to others of the Allies—but to corruption.

Then people began to shake their heads. What was the use of a steam-roller with no oil to run its works ?

As usual they began to look about for someone to blame.

While the interminable delays incidental to carrying through business in a country which is neither inclined to, nor apt in, carrying out business on the same lines as other countries, took place, there was plenty of time for gossip and scandal. Stories of treachery, of pro-Germanism at Court, and of the evil influences of Rasputin filled the air. Now it was the fault of the Minister; from his shoulders the fault was switched on to those of the Allies, and so the undercurrent of growls and grumbles began to assume a more threatening form.

The country was disturbed and anxious, advance and success gave way to retreat and failure, through no fault of the Commander-in-Chief or his soldiers.

Where then was the fault ?

It lay principally in the administrative side of the campaign. That meant munitions,

supplies, roads and railways, communications in general.

The last four affected the civil population as well as the military, and the dealing with large numbers of refugees, who embarrassed the military side of affairs. Food and fuel, those two arbiters between content and discontent, meant, especially in a Russian winter, the greatest of care, the greatest of economy, and a thorough and tireless system.

Which was to have precedence of supply, the army or the civil population ? And in what degree ?

A resolute and iron hand was necessary in these matters, but one which must be prepared to recognise that the odds were on corruption against co-operation.

Even when the man was found it had become a case of time and tide wait for no man, and loyalty and sincere endeavours had been undermined by the disloyalty and intrigues fostered by the enemy and the discontented.

Momentary successes cheered them on, but they could be but momentary, and it was at a period such as this that the Emperor came on to the field. For a time it seemed as if the tide of luck was running in his

favour, but the roots of revolution were too deeply planted, and the soil in which they grew too adaptable and prolific to permit of any serious hope for him.

Corruption and intrigues have existed in every country, even our own not having had a very clean sheet in old days. Russia had retained a fuller share of these bad qualities.

The natures and characteristics of the two peoples are different.

The Russians, attractive and likeable as they are in most ways, are by nature more unstable. Their descent from exaltation to intense depression is a very short one; or perhaps one should put it the other way about, though in these days the cloud of depression is a pretty long and heavy one.

The attraction which binds one to them can only really be experienced by a residence in the country itself, however much one may like them on meeting them elsewhere.

Hospitality, kindness, sympathy one found everywhere, and it sometimes strikes me that it is this intense desire to please, to make you happy and at home, which makes for weakness and want of stability.

Anyhow, that is my experience of the

country before Bolshevism took over the reins.

The pages which follow are neither intended for a form of apologia nor of contention with others who have written about and criticised the late Emperor.

But much has been said about him by people who were not so closely associated with him as I was. Much has been adverse.

One of his critics gave me—after a stay of twenty-four hours in Russia—an account of him which made me think he had spent those hours in the gutters of Petrograd, for nowhere else could he have gathered information which was as unjust as it was untrue, and as malicious as it was mistaken. This, too, was before the Revolution.

Whatever the mistakes of the Emperor, they did not arise from want of devotion to his country or to the cause of the Allies.

Everyone, I suppose, has shadows which pass before them at times like 'ships that pass in the night.' To me one of the darkest of these shadows is that of the late Emperor of Russia and those who belonged to him.

The sunbeams that light them up are the unfailing kindness which he always showed me in times of personal or other trouble, his

sunny and cheerful nature, and his unfailing courage when things seemed to be going badly.

His loyalty to the Allied cause was only equalled by his determination to fight out the war to the bitter end.

It is for others to 'cast stones.' I can only give a true view of what I saw of him. My happy memories of him are darkened by the tragedy of his end and the regret that I could do no more to save him and his family in the days when their fate may still have been said to hang in the balance.

Many of my notes could not, of course, for obvious reasons, be published, but such as are here are not picked out to give a one-sided view of a much-maligned monarch, but simply as traits of his character which may be of interest, and are anyhow as I found them.

Autocracy has met its end in Russia.

These notes are in no way the defence of a system. They are a defence of a person.

'Mr Critic' will at once answer: 'Yes, that is all very well, but the two, in a case of this kind, are so closely allied that it becomes impossible to differentiate between them.'

That in a way is true, but hitherto the

scales of Justice have been rather heavily weighted against the man—as between man and system.

It is to endeavour in some measure to readjust the balance that I publish these reminiscences.

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS II. AS I KNEW HIM

FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR

August 1914.
HEADQUARTERS, RUSSIAN ARMIES IN THE FIELD.

Soon after my arrival news came of the East Prussia operations which had such a fatal ending in the battle of 'Tannenberg,' but encouragement was given before long by the Russian successes against the Austrians—a very different job to tackle than the Germans.

The two leading events during my time with the Grand Duke Nicholas in the later months of the year were the 'Munitions and Guns' questions, and the events in the Caucasus, leading ultimately to the Dardanelles expedition.

The failure of the East Prussia offensive was very bad luck for the Grand Duke, but he looked at it from a point of view of service to

the Allies, inasmuch as it eased the position for the Allied armies in France.

As on joining I had no cipher it was of course pretty useless for me to wire even the scanty information I received, but the munitions business and the Caucasus trouble brought me into closer touch with the Grand Duke, though I was obliged to go to Petrograd and send telegrams through the Embassy on these matters.

Badly supplied as he was, however, the Grand Duke carried out successful operations against the Austrians, and would have held his ground and more, in all probability, if the administrative side of the work had been as good as the fighting side.

Lack of these absolute necessities, guns, munitions, flying service, proved too much for any commander, and 1915 was a year of depression and temporary defeat, saved by the gallantry of an army which might with luck to the enemy have been driven back to Moscow. Only the dogged fighting qualities of the Russians and the strenuous efforts of the Allies on the Western Front saved the situation.

The headquarters of the Russian armies at the commencement of the war were at



H.I.H. the Grand Duke Nicholas, with Staff Officers and Major-General Sir John Hanbury Williams;
at G.H.Q. Russian Armies in the Field, Baranovitchi. 1914.

Baranovitchi, and were located in various trains drawn up on the sandy soil of some pine forests amid scenery not unlike that of Aldershot.

A few adjacent huts served as workshops for the staff, but we of the Allied military missions were located in the same train as the Commander-in-Chief the Grand Duke Nicholas. We 'messed' in his dining-car. When the Emperor came down his train was drawn up on a special siding a little farther from ours, and in the pine forest, but near enough to be reached in two minutes' walk.

We remained at this place (going off individually at times to see the armies) till the late summer of 1915, when the retreat before the advancing enemy made us shift our quarters to Mohileff.

There was plenty of good going round this neighbourhood and one could ride for miles without touching much hard road, though the scenery was generally dull and uninteresting, the whole country being flat, and in winter looking very bleak and sombre.

18*th September* 1914.

I received the following telegram, which caused much amusement to the Russians :—

'The British Admiralty announce that the Germans have already sunk H.M.S. *Warrior* three times since the beginning of the war. It is suggested that another vessel should be selected for the next lie.'

6th October 1914.

At 2-30 I was summoned to see the Emperor. On arrival I found two huge Cossacks on guard at the door of his Imperial Majesty's train. It was drawn up in the pine forest opposite our own, was comfortably but very simply furnished, and an A.D.C. took me off to the little study at the end of the car, where the Emperor received me alone. He was dressed in perfectly plain khaki uniform, the coat being more of a blouse than ours, with blue breeches and long black riding-boots, and was standing at a high writing-desk. As I saluted he came forward at once and shook me warmly by the hand. I was at once struck by his extraordinary likeness to our own King, and the way he smiled, his face lighting up, as if it were a real pleasure to him to receive one. His first question was one of inquiry after our King and Queen and the Royal family, after which he asked about my wife and children.

He welcomed me as representing the British army in Russia, and asked a great many questions about the troops in France and about the Indian contingents, in which he was much interested.

We talked freely and pleasantly for some twenty minutes, after which he invited me to dinner, telling me to be sure to dispense with my sword, in which I was of course arrayed for this formal presentation.

The first impression left upon my mind was absolutely different from any that I had expected. I had always pictured him to myself as a somewhat sad and anxious-looking monarch, with cares of state and other things hanging heavily over him. Instead of that I found a bright, keen, happy face, plenty of humour and a 'fresh-air man.'

In the evening off in my newest suit of khaki to dinner. About sixteen of us in all—the two Grand Dukes, Nicholas and Peter, C.G.S., Q.M.G., the chaplain (Father George), La Guiche, the French Military Attaché, etc., and myself.

The usual zakouska to begin with, followed by a very simple dinner, soup, fish, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, soufflé and fruit, with kvass and light wines.

7th October 1914.

I told the Emperor of our visit to Warsaw, where the G.O.C. invited us to join him at the theatre, the idea being to re-establish the confidence of the public, who were somewhat alarmed by the proximity of the Germans.

After the play was over there was a ballet by ladies both stout and thin to represent the Allies, our lot—'Great Britain'—being represented as six sailors in white ducks, sky-blue caps and collars, who paraded with four pop-guns, which were let off at intervals to strains of music, to which the British Army, represented by six more ladies of the *corps de ballet* in red bonnets, red and black kilts (shortest kilts ever seen), pink stockings, white spats, and claymores, danced and waved red ensigns.

La Guiche had been equally amused by the 'French Army,' but in their gallant soldiers there was no display of legs, as they were so smothered in tricolours that they could hardly move. We were each called to stand up to receive the plaudits of the assembly at the compliment to our countries.

A little Cossack officer was attached to us there, very young, his mother an Armenian,

and he looked like a Persian girl, with most beautiful sympathetic eyes, but he was a bloodthirsty little fellow, and told me he had killed five Germans yesterday with his own hand.

Some people are very optimistic. One general told me he thought we should be in Berlin in four months.

On the other hand, one of my 'Allied colleagues' said that the U.S.A. would shortly make peace proposals, and the war would end. The Russians are certainly not 'taking any' peace proposals at present.

Aviation matters are a very weak point here.

7th November 1914.

When I was at Lodz the other day an officer commanding a Siberian corps told me he was twenty-three days in the train *en route* to his headquarters, and his men, of course, longer. It gives some idea of the time it takes Russia to put all her forces into the field.

15th November 1914.

The news of Lord Roberts's death came to-day. From nearly every Russian officer

I met and from all my Allied colleagues came expressions of sympathy. I think everyone without exception who knew 'Bobs' loved him. The Emperor sent a most kind message to me about him.

19*th November* 1914.

It was the 'name day' of the Lancers here and as a very special occasion I was given a glass of vodka. It must have been a fine old brand as it went down my throat like a torchlight procession.

2*nd December* 1914.

The Emperor told me of the death of poor Prince Nicolas Radziwill, who came across from England with me, and as we were walking on deck talking of old S. African days, prophesied to me his own death, and that the next great war would be between us and Russia. God forbid!

General Oba of Japan is a great favourite with us all, and told me that last night he had nightmare because I took him for such a long walk.

I spread the report that he had seen the Kaiser with his moustaches turned up, a yellow mouse sitting on one end and a pink

mouse on the other. This amused him much, and he greets me in the morning with 'Bon jour, pas de souris jaunes hier soir, n'est ce pas?'

All delighted with the news of Admiral Sturdee's victory.

The Emperor, discussing the talking of other languages but one's own, asked me if I was in India when a well-known Governor, having to speak on one occasion in French, referred to the term of service he had passed in the British Government as 'Quand j'étais dans le cabinet.'

I knew the Governor to whom he referred.

20th December 1914.

I wrote to Lord Kitchener as follows:—

Delay in movements and rumours of Russian losses being very heavy made me feel anxious as to the situation here. My anxieties were confirmed by a talk with General Marquis de La Guiche, French Military Attaché, who told me he had heard that there was a great shortness in guns, munitions and rifles, especially guns and munitions. Having no decent cipher, I made up my mind to go to Petrograd, see what I could do and have

a talk with the Ambassador. Accordingly I asked for an interview with the C.G.S., General Yanushkevich, told him of my proposed visit, and said I should be glad of any information in regard to the position, as if I could be of any help in cabling to England an opportunity would occur during my visit to the Embassy, where they had good ciphers and I, as explained before, had none.

Yanushkevich then spoke out quite freely and frankly, telling me of the shortness of guns and munitions which delayed the Russian advance—that the G.O.C.'s of armies were bitterly disappointed at not being allowed to advance, but that it was obviously hopeless to do so under the circumstances.

It is a great pity that he never spoke out so freely before. However, it is no use crying over spilt milk, and all one can do now is to hope that they will keep us more in their confidence, instead of suddenly telling one of trouble after one had believed all was going well.

I left for Petrograd that afternoon (last Sunday), arriving on Monday, when I told the Ambassador what had passed, and he sent a message to the Foreign Office, which I drafted, and which you doubtless saw.

Sir George Buchanan was in touch with the Japanese Ambassador when I left, and I hope something may be done by them to assist, though delay must of course ensue. None of us Allies know exactly what they have lost here actually in personnel or material, but the fighting has eaten up guns, rifles and munitions, and the Russians will have to remain more or less on the defensive till their wants are supplied.

I returned here on Thursday and at once called on the C.G.S., to whom I told what had passed, and suggested that he should cable to the Russian Military Attaché in London, setting forth quite clearly what the actual and pressing requirements were. I am afraid that even if you could help us it would mean some long delay, and there are, of course, the difficulties of communication with this country now the winter has set in. Japan and Canada might help via Vladivostock. Anyhow it looks like a somewhat long delay and a very irritating one.

The Q.M.G. here this morning said they had 800,000 men quite ready to go into the ranks, but all hung up through lack of munitions.

We have been sitting here, my colleagues

and I, since our last ' trek ' in the beginning of November, and not given any further trips, so I cannot say how things are going with the armies personally, but I know that the feeling of officers is one of great disappointment at the idea of a retrograde movement. The annoying part is that I cannot help feeling that someone must have foreseen this difficulty and did not act quickly enough. . . .

All the fresh troops I have seen coming along this line are of good physique and well fitted out. I cannot say what the officers are like. Yours, etc.,

J. H.-W.

28*th December* 1914.

Lunched with the Emperor on the Imperial train, and H.I.M. came up to me after lunch and talked about my ancestor, Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, who was Ambassador to Russia in the time of the Empress Catherine (then Grand Duchess).

He then turned to the all-important question of munitions, the lack of which had become very acute and terribly serious. He told me he was much obliged to me for calling the attention of the Staff to certain points

in regard to U.S.A. and Canadian supplies and questions of transport, winter difficulties, methods of business, and to urgency of giving their orders at once, if they decided to place their orders there. Having been five years in Canada and visited the U.S.A., I naturally knew something of business methods there, etc.

H.I.M. told me he had given orders for the immediate carrying out of all that is necessary.

NOTE.—I fear these orders did not have much effect, as the munition story was one of invariable delays and difficulties.

30*th December* 1914. DARDANELLES.

To-day I was sent for by the Grand Duke Nicholas, who saw me with the Chief of the General Staff, my friend Prince Galitzin having told me beforehand of the nature of the interview.

I was told by the Commander-in-Chief that the position in the Caucasus was very serious, that the Turks were massing forces against the Caucasus army, and that though he could retain a Caucasian army corps, which was intended for this front, he had not done so, and had told the C.-in-C. of the Caucasus front that he must get on as best he could,

but he felt sure that it would be for our mutual interests as Allies if we—that is, Great Britain—could render help by a demonstration of some kind which would alarm the Turks, and thus ease the position of the Russians on the Caucasus front. I answered that so far as I knew—and I had a pretty shrewd idea—our armies were not yet strong enough to spare sufficient men for a military expedition, but I asked him, in the event of its being possible, whether he thought a naval demonstration would be of any use. He jumped at it gladly.

(*N.B.*—It is of historical interest that this conversation was really the origin of what eventually developed into the Dardanelles operations, though I naturally, at the time, had no idea of the great development in that line which was to take place later on. These were, so far as I know, undertaken originally with a view to helping our Russian Allies out of a 'tight place.' It was thus the first chapter of what turned out to be an unfortunate undertaking, but it did anyhow render a considerable service to Russia. I left at once for Petrograd, saw Sir George Buchanan, and sent off a message, the answer to which eventually announced the proposed

action of our Navy and later on of General Sir Ian Hamilton's expedition, an expedition undertaken with the hope and expectation of some assistance from Russia. This was not promised, though at a later period troops were actually sent to Odessa with a view to helping, but circumstances prevented this, principally the munitions 'débâcle.')

2nd January 1915. PETROGRAD.

A Russian whom I met at the French Embassy was very complimentary to me, telling me that the Russians looked upon me as a sincere friend, and that the Emperor had talked much about me.

Friday, 8th January 1915.

To-day I was asked if I would like to visit the armies on the Warsaw side, and of course I gladly accepted. Trains all anyhow owing to heavy snow, and though we were due to have left at 5 P.M. we remained to dinner, and did not get off till 9. General Oba, of Japan, and Colonel Moukhanoff, our Russian staff officer, accompanied us, with La Guiche and Captain Langlois, the French officer sent over by General Joffre, making up the party. The Belgians preferred to remain quietly here.

Got off at 11 P.M., and next morning woke up in a regular Canadian blizzard. Langlois yesterday morning ordered a Russian uniform from a Jew tailor in the village at 10 o'clock, and it was ready at 5—so one can imagine what it looked like.

We arrived at Warsaw at 12 noon in slush and sleet, and went straight to the Hotel Bristol, where I found a wire from Headquarters asking if I would object to taking with us on our trip Mr Stanley Washburn, *The Times* representative.

Then at 7.30 we dined at the Polish club, the Club des Chasseurs, and I sat next my old friend, M. ——. He has lived a good deal in Germany—thinks that the G.'s will make a long and stubborn defence, but that political-economical disturbances — want of supplies—the gradual realisation of an impossible military situation, and the terrible losses sustained by the army—may cause a collapse at any time. He told me the Russians were very short of munitions and that the Minister for War had paid a visit to Warsaw a month or more ago to see what he could do with the factories there in the way of increasing the 'output,' and that the answer was: 'If you find the coal we'll

find the work'; but the Germans having burned many of the coal stores put an end to the proposal!

We remained till late and I walked back with my French comrades and Oba.

Sunday, 10*th January* 1915. WARSAW.

We were up early on the morning of the 10th, and just before we were due to start I received a telegram from England with regard to the spreading of the news of the Russian Caucasus success among the Turks and communicated it to the Grand Duke on my return.

Arrangements casual as usual—and having been told that we were off for two or three days had the necessary kit packed and came downstairs, when I heard we were to be back here to-night. So left Kay and my kit behind—as did the others.

We had a special train to Groditz. Reached G. at 10 A.M.—my third visit to that place—and found Headquarters of 2nd Army (General Smirnoff) located at the same 'Ladies' Rest Cure' establishment as before. Smirnoff's command consists of 3 A.C.'s—viz. 2nd Siberian, 4th A.C. and 1st A.C.

Got two motors and started off in a perfect

N.E. blizzard of snow and sleet, Moukhanoff and the two Frenchmen in one car and the Japanese General, Washburn and I in the other. Usual bad roads in a biting wind which blew 'flurries' of snow across a wide expanse of flat prairie. We lunched *en route*, mostly off garlic.

Arrived at the Headquarters of the 1st Corps, and delayed some time, as we were told we could see nothing unless we stopped the night—which of course we decided to do—though we had no kit, not even a tooth-brush. I had my maps and a shilling novel—neither of which are useful to sleep in or to brush one's teeth with.

A very pleasant old general in command, and a comfortable house, full of engravings of Napoleon and his battles, which one finds in many of the houses hereabouts.

We were anxious on this trip to get nearer to the advanced artillery positions than we had been allowed to go previously. The general himself, who shows age and weight, seemed more inclined to remain at home and direct the operations of his cook than to accompany us, but told off his chief of staff to take his place, and provided us with horses and a Cossack escort—with the proviso that

we should not go to the farthest batteries till after dark.

After lunch got on Cossack ponies and rode off to the Headquarters of the Division, the blizzard continuing—but I had a nice corky little horse and managed to keep warm. Heavy firing was going on in the distance, and we jogged along at a good pace—glad of a chance of getting some more active exercise than 'motoring.'

We arrived at the Artillery Headquarters at 4, where we were told we couldn't proceed till it got a bit darker, as the Germans—as we could hear—were busy shelling our road. However, we eventually got started, and reached the nearest battery while it was still light. Here the C.O. was very anxious to fire a few shots for our benefit, but as there was a distinct doubt as to the practical advantage of firing, and La Guiche and I both held more economical views as to the expenditure of Russian ammunition than they seem to hold themselves—we persuaded him to leave out this 'bit of the programme.' So we went on in the gathering darkness, till our escort halted and we were all told to dismount and walk. It was dark enough then. We proceeded through a long, thick

pine wood, passing several batteries *en route* —batteries very well located and said to be doing good work—till we reached a line of infantry trenches about 5 ft. 6 in. deep—sandy soil and easy to dig. Here we all went 'to ground' like rabbits.

All this time the firing was slackening—and the silence was only broken by an occasional Russian rifle shot. The latter became so regular that I inquired if these shots were fired for any special purpose—to let the Germans know the Russians were still awake, or something of the kind!—but I was assured they were only 'nerve shots' —*i.e.* firing by individuals who in the long strain of the 'night watches' fancied they saw someone advancing on the trenches. I am almost inclined to doubt my informants, as the regularity of intervals of shots became so striking—still, the bitter cold of a very dark night may have had that effect.

Scurried along to the sound of shells and sniping till we reached the advanced lines, where we got into an officer's dug-out where he had made himself very snug—had a clock and a glass window. Moved about a bit more through the trenches so as to get the lie of the land. We spent some time here

talking, and I asked whether the Germans had made any attempt at a definite attack, and was told they had shown no signs of it at all—that the fighting hereabout had resolved itself practically into a 'duel of artillery'—I fear more ammunition being expended by Russians than by Germans, without much effect. Counting as nearly as one could, it seemed to me that the Russians fired about ten rounds to the German one. Unless the G.'s are moving off and only fighting a sort of rearguard action to cover their move, I am afraid they have shown the more practical view of the situation—and not being able to locate the well-concealed Russian batteries, are determined not to waste shots at night anyhow. On this line supplies are coming in well, the men are in good health, and the losses are relatively small at the period of which I write.

We crept back in the darkness along the trenches quite silently. Suddenly at the end of the wood we found our Cossacks and horses—on the blackest, darkest night I can remember in India, Africa, Egypt, Burma, Canada or anywhere else—not a glimmer even of a star to light up a patch of snow. My Cossack horse-holder discovered

me somehow, and we had to feel for our horses' heads to know which end of the saddle we should climb on to!

Once landed in our saddles, the horses all instinctively held together, and we moved along, a bunch of officers and Cossack guides, more like a covey of partridges than the rabbits whose movements we copied along the trenches.

For about 2 miles our Cossacks led us without a mistake—the only sign I could get of whereabouts being a fire lit in a deep pit on the 'off' side of the road, and which I remembered before was burning in a sort of triangle. After another mile or two even the Cossacks—who have eyes like Red Indians—were puzzled, and we waited at a turn in the path, where a friendly 'picket' lent us a candle in a lantern, and our leading Cossack, fastening it to his stirrup iron, again led the way, and so by candle-light (as in Sherman's night march on Atlanta) we solemnly threaded our way along the forest track. Every now and then a horse would slip on the patches of ice which had got greasy with the half thaw, and the sound of an occasional shell would break the silence.

We finally found ourselves landed at the

hospitable doors of the old general—dinner, and early to bed—the Japanese General, Washburn and I in the drawing-room, where they had fixed up some little camp beds for us—quite warm on the top, but very cold below.

Breakfast at 7, and off to the headquarters of an infantry regiment—an old chateau, with a Red Cross nurse in charge.

From here we walked off to the artillery positions, where there was a regular duel of guns. We crept through the woods to keep under cover in scattered groups, and finally reached the ridge which overlooked the valley of the Ravka river. Our guns were pretty brisk all along the line. We could see the German position well, and every now and then the shriek of their shrapnel came whistling over. I could not observe any movement of enemy's infantry, but the artillery officer in command of the battery at which I was standing told me he had seen a strong column of infantry moving N.E. the day before—possibly towards Skiernivice, which is again occupied by the Germans.

Tuesday, 12*th January* 1915. WARSAW.

A real ' Russian ' start to-day. We were told to be up quite early for a long day to

visit the advanced lines in another direction. Down at 8 A.M., and hung about till 11, when there was no sign of cars. We waited patiently till 11.30, at which time our staff officer suggested breakfast.

Finally we got off at 12—much too late. A cold thaw had set in, but the sun came out and we trekked along in oceans of mud to the Headquarters of the G.O.C. We were landed in a lake of mire, and had to send a message to get a permit to go on. While we waited we watched the Russians shooting at a German aeroplane high up in the sky above us, but we could only see the little white puffs of smoke from the shrapnel and the German aeroplane sailing away, I am sorry to say, unhurt.

A staff officer joined us, and we walked on to get to the next battery. Neither he nor his map seemed of much use, so we worked our way by the sound of the guns—across a wood and some fields to a farm-house where a shell had burned the barn and stables, and the bodies of twenty or thirty horses were laid out, the latter evidently having been caught as they were tied up in their lines.

Meanwhile the artillery fire became brisker —a sort of final salute before darkness set

in, when both sides generally ease off a bit for supper—some machine-gun fire and a little infantry fire, and then silence: while in the distance you could see the glow of the burning houses in the town beyond. The Germans always direct a shot or two at night so as to worry the infantry who are there, and get a chance at them.

Stopped again for some time at one of the batteries where the men were resting after a day's work. As the darkness thickened you could see more fires blazing in the distance. It was now getting late, and as we had a long trek home we waded along through seas of mud for about a mile and a half with the motors, and so back to Warsaw and on to Headquarters, which we reached late on the night of the 13th.

(The above is an illustration of the trips we used to make from Headquarters.)

13*th January* 1915.

Our line of inspection on the 10th was from Groditz to Wola Pekosene, and thence to Jeruzal—Paplin; and on the 11th to Ossa—where after visiting the artillery positions above mentioned we moved on to the supporting infantry. Here the colonel had been

'shelled out' of his first quarters and moved into a smaller cottage—the shell had come through another cottage, killing two men and ending its career in his house.

Very nice country here, more broken and well wooded. From here the Russian line of defence takes a swing round to the S.E. towards Noveniasto.

Then on to the headquarters of the army at Groditz, where we talked to some German prisoners, who said they belonged to the 18th Regiment of 20th Reserve A.C., and had been serving since middle of August—were quite confident they would reach Warsaw—and though looking thin and miserable, appeared to be perfectly happy as to future success of their army. Their appearance, however, and ready answers gave one the idea that a warning had been given to men—in case of capture—to be careful how they talked.

Got an engine for our car and ran into Warsaw about 9 P.M.

24th January 1915.

The question of Russian co-operation over the Dardanelles business came up again and I had a long interview with the Grand Duke and Prince Koudacheff.

The former told me that the position in the Caucasus had been considerably eased by Russian successes, and he laid stress on the fact that he had made no suggestion as to the methods we should employ in rendering assistance to draw off the Turks from that theatre, and had never guaranteed any Russian co-operation, glad as they would of course be to give it should opportunity occur.

The Russian General Staff pointed out that their Black Sea Fleet, in view of the delay in building of their dreadnoughts, of the scarcity of their destroyers, and of lack of 'up-to-date' submarines, was only the equal of the Turkish Fleet (including, of course, *Goeben* and *Breslau*). Even, they added, that equality would only be reached when all the units could work together, and the absence of one or two of them would at once place the balance in favour of the Turks. The construction of their ships was such that they could only carry a four days' supply of coal. Coaling at sea was rendered extremely difficult by bad weather and the heavy seas which are met with in winter in the Black Sea. The nearest coaling base was 24 hours' sail from the entrance to the Bosphorus.

However much they wished to co-operate with the British Fleet, their hands were tied.

The strength of Turkish batteries covering the Bosphorus, given the number and calibre of their guns as compared with those of the Russian Fleet, was such as to give very little hope of success for the latter.

The question of military co-operation by Russia, which would be the most efficacious help she could render to the Allied forces—after the forcing of the Dardanelles—was one she could only undertake at the expense of her forces employed on the principal theatre of war, by the deprival from that theatre of at least two army corps.

Regarding the Caucasus — the absolute defeat of Turkey could not be accomplished there; even the taking of Erzeroum would not effect this.

An improvement in the Black Sea naval forces by the addition of the dreadnought *Imperatritza Marie* and up-to-date destroyers and submarines could only be effected by the coming month of May.

The Grand Duke laid great emphasis on the importance to the Allied cause of action against Turkey, as the crippling of that

country would, of course, have a most telling effect in the Balkans.

He could not promise support, either naval or military, but would naturally use every endeavour, should opportunity present itself, to strengthen the hands of the Allies.

(*N.B.*—Eventually, of course, it was found that Russia, owing to a conglomeration of difficulties, could give no help in this theatre.)

7th February 1915. G.H.Q.

Lunched with the Emperor, who had arrived at our Headquarters, and he was anxious to hear all about the arrival of our troops in France, very pleased about Admiral Beatty's success, he having been in Russia in the summer before the war, and made a great impression on the Emperor.

He also wanted to know all about my last trip to the front, and about Stanley Washburn, *The Times* correspondent, of whom I could, of course, give a good account as most friendly to the Russians.

He referred to Garibaldi's saying that if ever there was really a great war the first six months would decide the issue and the next finish the war. But he feared Garibaldi was a wrong prophet in this case.

He is inclined to believe the intelligence reports which say that the Germans have decided to send all their submarines (110 in number?—if they have got such a large number, which he doubts) into British territorial waters to sink all the ships they can. A big attack by zeppelins on our fleet is also projected.

15*th March* 1915.

I met the Emperor on one of his long walks at Headquarters, and as usual got off the road so as to be out of his way, for which he called me over the coals at lunch.

He is a tremendous walker, fairly walks his staff off their legs, and said I must walk where I liked, and not mind meeting him and his retinue, which is a pretty large one, as there are mounted police scouring about all the time.

The Emperor spoke of an article in the *Contemporary* on the terms of peace when the time comes. He said that the only right terms would be the conditions of the Allies —*i.e.* that the naval and military power of Germany should be wiped out, carrying with them, of course, the disappearance from power of the Kaiser, who is the factor that keeps matters going as they are.

He inquired after my family, and later on sent me all the English papers, illustrated and others, which he kindly continued to do all the time I was at Headquarters. He is looking very well, and as attractive and good-tempered as ever.

18*th March* 1915.

Spoke to H.M. on the subject of a letter I had just received from Stanley Washburn, who says: 'I think it is a great mistake for the Russians to stifle all publicity to such an extent. When they fare badly (as in East Prussia) all the Press (especially American) is flooded with German accounts of alleged prisoners captured. When we do well only the very curt official communiqués come out, with the result that the best part of the Russian news only comes out in the briefest way. The general result is a bit discouraging on British public opinion. The Russians so discourage all publicity of a legitimate sort that this unprecedented opportunity for the world to read about her armies and her new spirit is being utterly lost. It seems a great pity.'

The secrecy here is, of course, overdone in that way, and it all arises from the fear of

news passing through too many hands and the Russian contempt for any cipher except their own.

I am afraid, however, that it is going to be a difficult job, because though the Emperor sees the point he will not interfere with present arrangements. It is a difficult post in these ways and it is comforting to get a letter from our ever kind Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan, who says: 'I have already in my correspondence with the Foreign Office called attention to your good work and told them how much you are appreciated and liked at Headquarters by both the Emperor and the Grand Duke.'

19*th March* 1915.

At lunch with the Emperor, who had been much amused by the cinema show here, one scene in which, evidently taken on the Riviera, showed a lady bathing and attacked by a lobster from which she was rescued by a very stout-looking gentleman like an operatic singer.

H.M. asked me if I had been taking General Nakajima, the Japanese general who has succeeded Oba here, out walking. This was to draw me, as N. had been invited by me

to take 'une petite promenade,' and had answered: 'Excusez moi, Excellence, mais General Oba m'a déjà parlé de vos petites promenades et mes pieds sont tres courtes.'

He referred to a day when I walked Oba absolutely stiff.

20th March 1915.

The Emperor told me there was good news from France, and that the Germans show signs of being a bit rattled, but none has been vouchsafed to me.

Later on he sent me news of our trouble in the Dardanelles.

22nd March 1915.

Heard of the fall of Przemysl, and we had champagne for the first time at the Emperor's lunch, he being naturally very pleased with the good news.

27th March 1915.

Received from the Emperor, who is at Petrograd, *The Times* containing Lord Kitchener's speech in the House of Lords with which he is very interested.

I hope it will tend to stir up the munitions question here.

19*th April* 1915.

At dinner I had to tell the Emperor all about my recent trip to the Carpathians.

19*th May* 1915.

Received telegrams of congratulation to the Russian armies from Lord Kitchener and Sir John French, which gave great pleasure to the Emperor, who spoke most enthusiastically about both the senders.

The Emperor spoke of questions of retaliation, agreeing that the right line was to keep our heads on these matters now and punish after the war.

'Let the others have the discredit of brutality if they wish,' he said, 'we must come out of the war with our hands clean regarding such matters.'

20*th and* 21*st May* 1915.

With the Emperor on both these days. He suddenly turned round to me at lunch and said: 'I do like people who look you straight in the face, and no one would accuse you of doing otherwise.' He then talked of the trip he once made to India and that Lord Roberts wanted him to go to Quetta, though the 'diplomats' didn't approve.

I told him that I had marched through the Bolan Pass to Quetta in 1885 on the way to meet the Russian trouble about Penjdeh, and we laughed over the old song, 'We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do . . . the Russians shall not have Constantinople.'

He then talked of Egypt, and told me he had seen the graves of our men at Tel-el-Kebir (at which fight I had been present).

The heat and stuffiness of the car were awful, and he always knew I noticed it and had more windows opened for me.

23rd May 1915.

H.M. was glad to hear that on the night of the 21st the Chief of the General Staff, Yanushkevich, had assembled us Allied representatives and that we had signed the military agreement with Italy. I again called his attention to the interminable delays about munition orders. The Grand Duke ought to be better served in this matter.

A letter from England tells me that the French on 8th May fired 276 rounds a gun from their '75's' for the whole of their attacking force of 12 divisions. When shall we reach that here?

28th June 1915.

Returned from the front to Headquarters, and the Emperor took me off after lunch for a talk, and informed me of the manifesto he was going to issue to his people next day. He was much pleased with the 'Lloyd George munition arrangements,' and expressed his confidence in the future of the munition supply.

He was very distressed to hear of the sad loss which had fallen upon Lord and Lady Stamfordham by the death of their son in action.

July 1915.

At this time there were rumours of the change of command from the Grand Duke Nicholas to the Emperor.

7th July 1915.

Had a talk alone with the Emperor after dinner at Headquarters. He is quite confident, notwithstanding munition and other difficulties, and absolutely determined to see matters through to the end.

15th July 1915.

I told the Emperor of the stories going about that we had annexed munitions or

guns intended for Russia, one of the many yarns which help to make mischief. He laughed over it, and said he would take care to contradict it.

The idea of sending a British admiral here seems to give much pleasure, and our work in the Dardanelles, whatever may be the result, has evidently impressed—on some of our Russian friends anyhow—the service it has rendered to Russia by drawing off a large number of Turks who might otherwise be opposed to the Russian forces in the Caucasus.

4th August 1915.

Warsaw has fallen, and though the Emperor was fully prepared to hear of the fall, it will, I feel sure, be a great blow to him. The Grand Duke is undismayed, but it is very hard on him, after all he had done and would have done, to be let in by the lack of the one thing needful.

The Germans, however, have failed in their great objective—to destroy the Russian armies by dividing them.

Alexeieff told me that he had all his positions ready for the retreat and safeguarding of Petrograd—the nerve-centre of Russia.

18*th August* 1915. PETROGRAD.

There is talk of revolution and of a separate peace with Germany. The Emperor is said to be firm and strong in his decisions when with the headquarters of the armies, but to weaken directly he gets under other influences. However, from my knowledge of him, he will remain loyal throughout to the cause of the Allies.

Looking at the situation here calmly and dispassionately, I am convinced of certain points:

1. There is a great deal of criticism, if not worse, of what is called the delay of the Allies' offensive in France.

2. People here, whose nerves have already been highly tried by reverses, are irritated by what appears to them likely to be a serious disaster to Russia, and are looking about for someone to hang.

3. That they do not realise that it is their own fault that the munition supply has broken down.

4. That the Press is not playing up as it might.

All these are danger signals which you cannot afford to ignore, and though I have tried to sift a good deal of what is the gossip

of alarmists from what is really the truth, there is no doubt that the country is much alarmed and disturbed, and that if some action is not taken soon, matters will drift from bad to worse.

Our Headquarters are to be moved in view of the situation at the front.

6th September 1915.

The Emperor takes command of the armies in the field to-day, and the Grand Duke Nicholas goes to the Caucasus as Governor-General and C.-in-C.—a great break-up.

At 10 A.M. we attended a service in the cathedral to celebrate the arrival of his Imperial Majesty. It was short but impressive, rows of ecclesiastical dignitaries in golden mitres and robes, which were lit up by the black dress of the others.

The Emperor stood out in front, alone; we all in rows behind the Grand Duke, with whom I had been since August 1914, who leaves to-morrow. Meanwhile the air is full of rumours and intrigues. As the Tsar has taken over the command of the armies, he takes great responsibilities with it, and has great powers if he chooses to exercise them, and if he can see personally that his wishes

are carried out, in opposition to the difficult obstacles which constantly arise in this country.

He has already been very kind and open in his talks to me on many occasions, and his excellent knowledge of English and of our institutions makes our interviews easy.

A message arrived inviting me to dine in the Emperor's train. We had a pleasant and small party, the Emperor joining in all the talk and seeming in good spirits.

After dinner he sent for me to see him in his little study. He told me that he had intended from the commencement of the war to take personal command of the armies, but that the pressure of Government and diplomatic matters at Petrograd had delayed him.

He felt, however, that the moment had now come, that it was his duty to be near his soldiers at this difficult time, and that he had in General Alexeieff a loyal and excellent Chief of the Staff and military adviser.

I then asked him as to our relations and how I was to put matters before him should occasion arise (not, of course, as Emperor, but as C.-in-C.). He said I must always treat him in the same way as I had the Grand Duke.

'You can ask to see me whenever you like and I shall be delighted to talk things over. Have you anything on your mind now ?'

I represented two matters of urgency, the state of affairs at the port of Archangel and the question of the new proposed railway from Alexandrovsk (the Murman railway).

Of the latter he said: 'I take the greatest interest in it, because it was my father's idea originally, and I am specially anxious, for all reasons, to see it pushed on.'

I then told him how the Grand Duke Nicholas had said to me at parting that he felt sure I would be the same to the Emperor that I had been to him, and of his high opinion of Alexeieff.

He was, I think, much pleased to hear of the way the G.D. had spoken. 'Did the Grand Duke say that to you ?' he said, and I was glad in these days of malicious gossip to show the Emperor what loyal support, in face of the mischievous talk, he had from his predecessor in command.

We talked a bit more, and as I was taking my leave he added: 'You know what my powers are here. I can give any order I like and have it carried out, remember that.'

9th September 1915.

The Emperor takes up his quarters at Government House, Mohileff, the head-quarters of the armies now.

12th September 1915.

We chiefs of Allied military missions lunch and dine daily with the Emperor.

16th September 1915.

Last night was next to the Emperor at dinner. It was a sort of *Vanity Fair* hard case: 'What should you do when you are sitting next to an Emperor at dinner, have a bad cold in the head and have forgotten your handkerchief?' I fear I only solved it by 'sniffs' when he wasn't looking.

We talked on every conceivable subject, from the Shah of Persia to questions of shyness. On the latter he told me that when young he went on a state visit to Berlin, and being very shy did not utter a word to either of his neighbours at a state banquet, so to put him quite at his ease the Duke of Cambridge, who was sitting opposite him, called out at the top of his voice, 'Your neighbour is very deaf, you had better speak out very loud to him,' with not at all a reassuring effect.

19*th September* 1915.

The change in command seems to be passing in more or less smooth waters, but the waves may kick up at any moment.

20*th September* 1915.

I had a conversation with the Emperor on various matters which I had been asked to represent by Sir George Buchanan:

1. Shortage of food and fuel at Petrograd, difficulties of the winter, inrush of refugees, and effect on military situation if riots broke out. Goremykin's position was a pretty difficult one.

2. Importance of organisation of Russian ports for dealing with supplies, especially in winter.

The difficulties in the Emperor's way are the utter absence of any method in which what is true is separated from what is false. There is a clash now in Russia, as indeed there has been before, between the methods of 100 or 1000 years ago and those of the present day, but if they can pull through this war under their system of autocratic government there will be a fight between two systems after it is over. However, we have got to win the war first.

Task in France not hastened by the locking up in Gallipoli of 11 of our divisions and 2 of the French.

Probably have compulsory service at home ere long, when our strength at front will be considerably increased.

25*th September* 1915.

The Emperor, to whom I had shown a memo on the munitions question, told me he was again taking the matter up with the W.O. at Petrograd. Altogether a satisfactory talk, H.I.M. finishing with the words: 'I am absolutely determined to push this war through till we conquer Germany.' He was most emphatic on this and as kind as usual.

28*th September* 1915.

The murder of Miss Cavell has caused a lot of indignation here, and one officer said to me: 'This will bring in that Mr Wilson of the United States, I expect.'

29*th September* 1915.

The Emperor sent a message of congratulation to the British armies on Monday night, and the answer came at 3 P.M. on

Tuesday—quick work in these days—and he expressed great pleasure about it.

30th September 1915.

Even Ministers are not spared from casual arrangements when travelling in this country. A Council of Ministers arrived yesterday, and the dining-car had been forgotten, so they all arrived famishing and joined old Goremykin, who had already arrived, probably not in the best of tempers.

A neighbour who sat next me at dinner, looking at the Premier, said : ‘ Look at that old fox. I should dearly like to twist his tail for him.’ Evidently the poor old gentleman is not very popular. The Emperor has a pretty busy time with these visits after his usual morning reports from the C.I.G.S.

One of the Ministers spoke of the anxiety of the King of Bulgaria regarding his property in Austria and Germany, a situation which is much more likely to influence him in regard to the choice of the side of the fence off which he is to fall than any high ideals as to the justice of either cause.

He then addressed this sovereign by a variety of names, beginning with a dog and ending with a pig, which I fear would have

shocked the sovereign concerned, and in any case would have decided the question of his alliance. The courtesy and kindness of Russians is extraordinary, but they have a fine repertoire for use if they wish to enforce an expression of dislike or disagreement. He ended his remarks by saying: 'He is what your Mr Gladstone called "a Bulgarian atrocity."'

2nd October 1915.

About 2000 Siberian recruits were inspected by the Emperor—a short, sturdy lot of country boys who marched well and looked well.

We followed H.I.M. down the line, after which they marched past and went off singing, and after dinner he told me that they had sung a good many uncomplimentary things about the enemy. I read him my daughter's account of the last zeppelin raid, in which he was much interested.

The Bulgarians, he said, were mobilising rapidly.

4th October 1915.

At dinner last night H.I.M. told me that he had motored up the river-side for some

way this afternoon, hired a boat and had a jolly good row till he was too hot to go on any more, and told the boatman, who didn't know who he was, to put him ashore at a certain spot where he knew he could rejoin his car. The boatman argued and objected, wishing to select his own landing-place. Finally it was explained to him who his crew were, and he nearly fell overboard with shock.

The Emperor told me that he was leaving for a visit to Petrograd, and that if I was up there I was to get into touch with him at Tsarskoye Selo. He laid stress upon my seeing him personally whenever occasion should arise.

I spoke to him about the lack of guns and he quite grasped the need for them in large numbers and also for plenty of notice of their requirements, but the delays continue after he has raised the questions of all these requirements.

The Emperor spoke to me of his children. He is evidently very devoted to them, and said that sometimes he forgot he was their father, as he enjoyed everything so much with them that he felt more like an elder brother to them. He rarely refers to the

Tsarevitch's health, but to-night I could see that he was anxious about him. I suppose he recognises the fact that the boy's health can never be satisfactory, and no doubt wonders what will happen if he lives to succeed to the throne. Anyhow, he is doing all he possibly can to train him on for what, if he ever succeeds, will be a very heavy task. He wishes very much that he may be able to travel about and see something of the world, and gain experiences from other countries which will be of use to him in Russia, with all the complications, as he put it to me, of this enormous Empire.

I wondered if he felt any doubts as to the prospects of autocracy, as he so often says when questions crop up regarding some action which one would imagine an autocrat could take: 'You see what it is to be supposed to be an autocrat.'

The real trouble is that if anything is going wrong, and I happen to have to represent it to him, though action is nearly always immediately taken, it is carried out in such a way by those to whom it is entrusted that it becomes a report apparently satisfactory to him and is left at that. Things are not sufficiently followed up and worked out.

Catherine was a wonderful ruler of Russia, but these are not the days of Catherine.

17*th October* 1915.

A parade of the Cossacks of the Guard, attended by the Tsar and Tsarevitch, and next day a service in the church for the name day of the latter, after which we lunched with the Emperor, Stanley Washburn of *The Times* being of the party. An album of photographs had been prepared by Mr Mews, who accompanies W., and I had the presenting of it to the Tsarevitch, after which I talked Vladivostock Railway matters with the Emperor.

29*th October* 1915.

Sat next the Empress at dinner, she having come here for a short visit.

The Empress asked me about my family again this evening, and I told her that to-day was the birthday of my father, who, if he were still alive, would be 116 to-day, as he was born in 1799.

The Empress spoke to me of her indignation at the delay caused to the Empress Mother in her journey to Russia by the German authorities, and of her own determination in

those anxious days just before the outbreak of war that the cause of Russia and the Allies was a just one. That she dreaded the horrors of war which must follow there is no doubt, but she stood loyally for Russia throughout.

Her relief when she heard that Great Britain was to be one of the Allies was great. She had always loved our country, and had faith that never wavered of our determination and support.

How far it was her influence that persuaded the Emperor to take personal command of the troops in the field is a vexed question.

I give the account of the Emperor himself to me personally on his decision, and there was no particular call for his telling me the facts as clearly as he did.

(Note.—Count Fredericks, who was a very constant friend of mine, and naturally closely in the confidence of the Emperor, never, so far as I remember, discussed it with me. He was never an intriguer, and frequently, I imagine, expressed his opinions frankly to his Imperial master, as he told me on various occasions of his regret at his advice not being taken, and before the Revolution, evidently in anxiety at the turn of events, told me that

he thought G.H.Q. ought to be moved to Petrograd, or the Emperor's absence from the capital be less frequent.)

1*st November* 1915.

The Emperor left yesterday, anxious about the report of an accident to King George when riding in France, but luckily the news is reassuring. He told me he was very sorry to leave Headquarters, as he liked soldiering much better than politics.

H.I.M. is very pleased with the arrival of our Admiral, Phillimore, whom he much likes.

Sir George Lloyd (now Governor of Bombay) has also been on a visit and made a most excellent impression on H.I.M. and others.

11*th November* 1915.

Prince Galitzin writes me from Tiflis :

'One realises the distance we are one from the other by the long time the letters take to come. The Grand Duke (Nicholas) hopes that as you have seen all the fronts of our western armies you may perhaps wish to see the Caucasus front and in that case tells me to say how delighted he will be to see you.

'We have been to Kars and farther towards

our front in that direction, and the troops we saw were simply splendid, and it was so interesting to me to see all the places I had not seen since 1877 (Turkish war). We also went to Batoum, which I knew before, but was immensely struck by the splendour of the landscape and the wonderful vegetation.

'Tiflis, which I had not seen for 16 years, has much grown, but is no longer the gay place it used to be, maybe because of the war and that so many of my old friends are no longer of this world.'

(*N.B.*—The writer distinguished himself in '77.)

14*th November* 1915.

Having been on a visit to the armies, had to give the Emperor a report of what I had seen, and he told me of a visit he had paid to our submarines, how well he was received and what admirable work they were doing.

As I was talking the little Tsarevitch, who is full of fun and mischief, came and grabbed my coat-tails, somewhat upsetting the dignity of the business with his father, to whom he is devoted.

Count Fredericks, the Maître de la Cour, asked me to go to his room after dinner

to-night as he had something special to tell me. I went and sat with him after dinner, and he led off by saying that our friendship was so firm now that he wished to make the following communication to me.

He said that he had received a communication from Count Eulenburg, the Prussian Court Chamberlain (a similar post to that held by Fredericks in Russia), in which he said that the Kaiser was so anxious to find some means of bringing the Russian Emperor and himself into the old standing of friendship again. It was regrettable that they should be at war, etc.; endeavouring, in fact, to induce Russia to come to terms with Germany.

The communication, he said, had been laid before his Imperial master, and the end of the matter was that the Emperor said the letter could be thrown into the fire, and that any similar letters would be treated in the same way.

'That,' said the Emperor, 'is my answer to any communications of the kind from the Kaiser.'

Fredericks added: 'I wished to tell you this personally, as we have established such happy relations together, and I know how much attached you are to the Emperor.'

I thanked him for his confidence in me, and added that I never for a moment thought that the Emperor would communicate with our enemies, but that I was very glad that he should honour me by keeping me *au fait* of these underground workings of theirs.

(*N.B.*—I communicated the above to my superior authority in England, and heard nothing more of the matter again, but it was curious that in July 1918 the *Gaulois* published a letter from M. Frederic Masson to the effect that he had received a document, from a most reliable source, proving that the Emperor Nicholas II. was absolutely loyal to his Allies.

'In November 1915 Count Eulenburg, the Prussian Court Chamberlain, sent a letter to Count Fredericks, Minister of the Imperial Court of Russia, expressing a wish to see their old-time friendship re-established between the two Emperors.

'The Tsar entrusted the drafting of the reply to M. Sazonoff, his Foreign Minister, who submitted this reply to the Emperor:

'"Get the Kaiser to send a collective peace proposal to all the Allies of Russia."

'The Tsar thought this reply perfect, but added that after reflection he would prefer

that Count Eulenburg's letter should remain unanswered. He wrote on the margin of the letter:

'"The friendship is dead, it must never be mentioned again."'

Reuter telegraphed above account to the Press in England in July 1918.)

15*th November* 1915.

To-night we talked fishing, etc., and the Emperor told me of his English tutor who taught him how to throw a fly, then shooting and sport generally.

We had talked business in the morning and it was well to drift on to other things.

A great discussion on the subject of talk, gossip, etc., and whom one should trust most, politicians, diplomatists or soldiers. Possibly the surroundings settled the question, for it ended easily in favour of the last-named. He is so keen for a good feeling between the two countries, and certainly, so far as he is concerned anyhow, our relations could not be better. As the Grand Duke Nicholas had sent me a message inviting me to pay a visit to the Caucasus, I informed the Emperor of this, but the situation does not admit of my going as yet.

16th November 1915.

H.M. referred to the reports in the Press of mischief to the Bethlehem (U.S.A.) works, where they have a big contract for Russia, and I told him that was one of the difficulties anticipated when the question of orders arose, and pointed to the necessity of not limiting their orders and amounts so much as they had.

He told me that on his visit to Petrograd he was taking all these matters up, and also the question of Riga, where the moment the ice breaks up the mines will break out to sea and the German ships may try to force an entry before these are replaced. He had spoken about the latter business during his last visit to Riga, and of the necessity of driving the German land forces out of that neighbourhood before the spring.

He has a heavy weight on his shoulders as, besides his naval and military business, the additional work of government and diplomatic affairs is too much for one man.

29th November 1915.

Last night H.I.M. told me that according to his information the Alexandrovsk Railway would be ready by February, or possibly

January. I hope it will, though I fear it is an optimistic estimate. He also told me that he was bearing in mind what I had said to him about the Vladivostock line, and the corruption existing among railway officials, and was specially going up to Petrograd to try and push matters through.

He is so keen, if he were well supported.

12*th December* 1915.

I had intended to go to Kieff, but the C.G.S. wished me to stop here, and I was enabled to speak to H.I.M. about the idea of a visit of some General Officer from England to keep up the liaison, and give us all verbal information from that side. He is quite keen about it, and only said: 'I make one condition: that is that you do not leave us and will stay on here.'

14*th December* 1915.

Talked of superstitions, of which the Russians are full, and of the excitement caused by a hare running across the road in front of one, of which I had an illustration when driving in a car one night, the officer with me denying at once that it was a hare.

Then the question was raised whether

Russia's bad railway system had not really proved a blessing in disguise, considering the material that would have been at the disposal of the Germans in their rapid advance this year had a better system existed. He had sent a wire to Archangel to tell the authorities there to take all possible steps to free the ships in the ice.

16*th December* 1915.

From a discussion on Salonika matters the Emperor told me how he got the last telegram from the Kaiser before the war, which was sent after the German Army was mobilised. He had made up his mind and was dog-tired when he went to bed. Had done some of the ciphering himself, and that the Empress had been the greatest help to him throughout those anxious days and nights, working with him at the ciphers and as indignant as he was with the Germans.

After I had left the Headquarters for my own quarters I got a message from old Count Fredericks to say he wanted to see me, and back I went about 11 P.M. He wanted to talk over one or two matters, and, he said, 'to be assured that if a British general comes over here you will not leave us.' I

told him I certainly would not. 'Well then,' he answered, 'I may assure my august master that you have no intention of leaving.'

17*th December* 1915.

The following telegram was sent by the Emperor to the admiral at Archangel:—

'The Emperor orders you to take all the measures in your power to discharge and free from the ice the British steamers whose return to England is essential on account of the shortness of transports. Telegraph to Headquarters the state of affairs, having taken, I repeat, exceptional measures for the fulfilment of the task laid upon you as this is demanded in the interests of the army.'

An answer was received from the admiral saying he would do all possible, but it is evident that he has not enough ice-breakers, I fear.

I am always at the question of the Archangel and Vladivostock routes, and it is difficult to continue speaking to the Emperor about it, as he ought not to be troubled with these details, but he has so often laid stress upon the importance of it all in conversation with

me that I feel all risks must be taken, even if I am thought interfering, to push these matters along.

On the occasion of the New Year, 1916, the Emperor received the news of his appointment as a Field-Marshal of the British Army, which gave him real satisfaction and pleasure. He has been moving about among his troops a good deal, and as I had once spoken to him laughingly on these being the days of 'publicity,' and he had said how much he hated advertising himself, when we met again after his last visit to the troops he remarked that he had 'been doing a bit more of the publicity and photography business.'

At the New Year I was in Petrograd and was sent for one day by Count Fredericks, the Maître de la Cour, and he told me he was much perturbed by malign influences which were being exercised here to make trouble between our respective countries, and on my return to my hotel I found a message from Tsarskoye Selo to say the Emperor wished to see me there.

7th January 1916.

I had a long conversation with Count Fredericks at his house this evening. He is

much upset and annoyed to find that there are intrigues going on here to make difficulties between us and the Russians, and wanted to hear if I could throw any light on the matter.

I told him there was not the slightest foundation for any such stories, and that the tales of reported moves on our part towards the Germans were laughable if they were not so mischievous.

He then spoke about the question of playing our National Anthem when compliments were being paid to the Allied representatives, owing to its similarity to the German anthem. I explained that *Rule, Britannia*, which has hitherto been played here on these occasions, is not our National Anthem. (This matter is referred to elsewhere in a conversation with the Emperor.)

On leaving I emphasised again the falsity of any idea of differences between our respective countries, and if bad feeling existed it must be in Russia and not at home. He then asked me to be on the watch for mischief of the kind, which I assured him I would, but it most probably existed in Petrograd, to which place I was but a rare visitor.

9th January 1916.

Went off at 11 by train to Tsarskoye Selo, was met by a carriage and at once shown in to the Emperor, whom I had the honour of congratulating on his appointment as one of our Field-Marshals. He told me that I need have no fear of the anti-British mischief, that it only arose from malicious intriguers, and after a talk over the usual shipping and munition difficulties I left.

13th January 1916.

I showed the Emperor at dinner the enamel cigarette case which had been sent to me by 'Fourteen Welshmen at the Moscow Metal Works' as a souvenir of a visit I had paid specially to them while I was at Moscow.

They were working on material for use in aeroplane construction, and he was very keen that they should remain to work instead of returning to enlist, as, being specialists at the job of 'tin-plate rolling,' they would be most hard to replace.

14th January 1916.

The Russian New Year's Day.

Had a long talk to Alexeieff and Admiral Russin on munition matters, in which there

appears to be some improvement, due no doubt to the energy with which the Emperor pursues this all-important question.

Alexeieff received the G.C.M.G., at which he was very pleased, and asked me to draft his letter of acknowledgment.

I sat next the Emperor at dinner, and he spoke of the enormous work a history of this war would entail, that one should be drawn up by the Allies conjointly and a simpler edition published for schools and so on with illustrations.

We talked of technical education, and I told him of a letter of Lord Rosebery's, I think, which was written years ago, pointing out the superiority of the Germans in that direction, and he agreed upon the importance of it, which, he said, 'is about the only civil thing I can say for them now.' But the difficulties in Russia were the enormous expenses involved and the old question whether they were yet fit for such an advance.

A telegram of good wishes from the British Army gave him much pleasure. Also others from India and all over the Empire. 'Times are changed,' he said. 'Fancy a Russian Emperor receiving congratulations from India.'

19*th January* 1916.

We all went down to the 'Blessing of the Waters.' The Emperor led the procession down to the river, following immediately after the archbishop and other church dignitaries. It was about 20 below zero and the ice was broken up for the ceremony.

At dinner H.I.M. told me how pleased he was with the speech which Sir George Buchanan was making at Petrograd, and he mentioned that one of the anti-British mischief-makers was a lady who had married an Austrian and become very pro-enemy, trying to set the Russians against us, and saying that we meant to throw Russia over at the first chance, etc.

He then got on to the Railway business, I having explained how anxious Lord Kitchener felt about the Vladivostock line, telling me that the new Minister for Railways and Communications, Trepoff, was expected next day, and that he had a good opinion of his capabilities and keenness.

Then talked of Queen Victoria, Lord Salisbury, Rhodes and others.

After dinner he carried me off to his room about the wording of a telegram he wished to send in English.

He is most anxious that all possible should be done to help the broken-up Serbian Army, and delighted with the picture New Year cards of all the regiments of the British Army, picking out the 'Blues,' the 'Greys' and the 16th Lancers, in which regiments he is especially interested. I asked if a set might be sent on to the Tsarevitch, which is being done.

The delay in ordering of more guns has, I hope, now been settled, but late in the day.

24*th January* 1916.

The Emperor much pleased with the visit of Major-General Callwell, who has come over to give us news of our operations in France and elsewhere, a visit which he thought most useful and hoped would be repeated. He said if it was in his power he would insist on it, so I remarked that now his Majesty was a Field-Marshal of the British Army he had the opportunity.

Callwell is so able, tactful and sensible that he made his visit a complete success.

26*th January* 1916.

At dinner to-night H.I.M. talked about empires and republics; his own ideas as a young man were that he had, of course, a

great responsibility, and felt that the people over whom he ruled were so numerous and so varying in blood and temperament, different altogether from our Western Europeans, that an Emperor was a vital necessity to them.

His first visit to the Caucasus had made a great impression on him and confirmed him in his views.

The United States of America, he said, was an entirely different matter, and the two cases could not be compared. In this country, many as were the problems and the difficulties, their sense of imagination, their intense religious feeling and their habits and customs generally made a crown necessary, and he believed this must be so for a very long time, that a certain amount of decentralisation of authority was, of course, necessary, but that the great and decisive power must rest with the Crown. The powers of the Duma must go slowly, because of the difficulties of pushing on education at any reasonably fast rate among all these masses of his subjects.

At the beginning of February I was away at Odessa to see that port and the flying school, etc., returning to Headquarters to see the Emperor, which I did on 14th February,

concerning the question of the dispatch of a Russian general to England and France.

The matter was in discussion with Alexeieff, of course, but the Emperor's personal knowledge of England and the English language made him frequently prefer to go into these questions personally.

I told him quite frankly that the British Army was now a much larger one, and of course a most important factor in the final decision, which had not been quite grasped by many Russians, whose minds seemed to rest on our little Expeditionary Force as still being the limit of what we could do in placing numbers in the field. To this he cordially acquiesced, saying: 'I should think so indeed; the number of divisions you have placed in France is marvellous.'

We then talked of General Belaieff as a possible man to send.

He inquired how I enjoyed my first experience of flying at Odessa.

17*th February* 1916.

The Emperor took me to his own room to-day and talked of the progress of matters. I pointed out that the central factor in the war was British sea power, on which depended

the transport, commerce and finance by which we were able to help the Allies, but that our sea power was not unlimited and we could not transport men, munitions stores and so on continually to different points, as well as provide for requirements in Great Britain and dispatch of munitions and other necessities to Russia, France and other places; that our considerably increased armies meant great increases of staff and cadres to complete them, besides the necessity of experience for oversea expeditions —climatic conditions, clothing, etc., all affecting these, and thus pointing to the concentration of our forces in France and Belgium, where these difficulties could be got over with greater ease, apart from any strategical views in the matter.

We were only too anxious to fall in with any aims or proposals of the General Staff here, but some of these pointed to plans or projects which did not take sufficiently into account the limits of shipping and sea work generally.

19*th February* 1916.

The Emperor wished me to meet Kuropatkin, who came to lunch, and we had a talk afterwards.

He asked me how I stood the cold of the Russian winter, but I told him I had been in some below zero weather in Canadian winters and liked it. 'Well,' he answered, 'perhaps we shall find the climate of Berlin better next autumn.'

He seems a bit of an optimist.

The most striking bit in the future history of the war, he said, would be the 'making of the British Armies,' an unparalleled feat for which we owed much to Kitchener.

20*th February* 1916.

The Emperor spoke to me at dinner on his views about Finland and Poland. Somewhat arbitrary I thought as to the former, but as to Poland he said that he liked the Poles and appreciated all they had done and how much their country had suffered during the war. He said he would grant them a measure of self-government with which he thinks they will be content, but it is going to be a difficult and delicate matter to carry through, a somewhat similar one to our Irish question.

He added what a curious thing it was that people living so near one another as the Russians and Poles, or the British, Scotch

and Irish and Welsh, should be so different in many of their characteristics.

There had been difficulties about the singing of our National Anthem in Russia, because the tune was so similar to that of the German, and he asked me to send him a copy of the note I had made for him about it, the history of its having been written by Dr John Bull in 1689, first published in 1742, popularly adopted in 1745 after the rebellion, translated into German by Heinrich Harries and sung to the original air in 1790 at a birthday celebration in honour of the King of Denmark, the Germans thus having taken it from us forty-eight years after it was published.

He talked a long time and the party at dinner got quite fidgety for him to start smoking.

He told me in confidence that he was going to open the Duma in person, as, though he hated speaking, he thought it was better that he should say a few words on this occasion. He is very popular among all the Allied generals here, which is well, as there are plenty of critics of him in other quarters.

22*nd February* 1916.

The opening of the Duma by the Emperor passed off successfully to-day, and as I

happened to be up here at Petrograd for a day or two I managed to get a corner from which to view it. I felt sorry for the Emperor, who I knew disliked the idea of having to appear at this sort of function, but all went well and was fully reported in the Press.

27th February 1916.

On my return to Headquarters I told the Emperor I had seen General Sir Arthur Paget, who, with Pembroke, had brought over the Field-Marshal's bâton for presentation to him. Congratulated him on the opening of the Duma and said I thought Petrograd was more cheerful. 'Do you think the Duma business has anything to do with that?' he answered, 'I hope it had.'

He then told me about the Grand Duke George's visit to Japan, being very pleased with the way it all went off.

I told him the story told me by his brother's (the Grand Duke Michael's) A.D.C. of the Division Sauvage, which the G.D. commanded.

The other day the Austrians who were opposed to the Division Sauvage signalled over to them: 'We have many of your co-religionists here, Turks, come over and join us.'

'All right,' answered the D.S., and went over, did a good raid and shot a lot of the enemy, returning successfully.

I mentioned an impression I had gathered from talks to all sorts and kinds of people—that Russia looks to a decision of the war by the end of 1916, and that she will be much disappointed if it is not arrived at by then. I mentioned this to the Emperor, who, of course, agreed to the natural desirability of such a consummation, but added: 'It is no use speculating as to dates, what we have got to do is to stick to it patiently and firmly to the bitter end.'

1*st March* 1916.

Paget's mission left to-day, having presented the bâton to the Emperor with all due ceremony. Paget and Pembroke looked very smart, and it was good to see a red and a blue coat again after all the khaki, Paget towering over most people in the room.

The Emperor gave a lunch for the mission and drank to the health of our King. Later on he turned to me in his kind, quiet way and said: 'Sir Hanbury [as he always called me], I drink to you too.'

17th March 1916.

The Emperor after an absence of some time returned to Headquarters yesterday. He is always so bright and cheerful that one cannot but be cheerful with him. It is a wonderful temperament for a man who must have such cares and anxieties on his mind, and I am sure is a good inspiration for others.

He told me at dinner about the British cinema 'show' which has been sent over here, that it was quite excellent, lasting over two hours, and he was never the least bit bored.

I had received a chaffing message from my friend Prince Galitzin (who was with the G.D. Nicholas in the Caucasus) about matches which I was always accused of stealing when I was with the Grand Duke, from his dining-car, so the Emperor suggested I should pack a very small box of matches in a very large parcel and send it off to G., whom it reached eventually, when he repacked it and passed it on heavily sealed to the G.D.

19th March 1916.

Callwell, Wigram (his A.D.C.) and Mark Sykes are all here, and the latter has interested

H.I.M. immensely with his wonderful knowledge of Arab and other matters.

H.I.M. talked to me about an article in *The Nineteenth Century* which I had sent him on some sermons which had been preached in Berlin and Leipzig. He said it was difficult to believe that such malice and bitterness could be displayed by a clergyman in any church.

The scheme of a landing at Alexandretta he thought very attractive, but the difficulties he feared insurmountable.

25*th March* 1916.

We had the British cinema show here yesterday, Emperor and Tsarevitch being present and very pleased.

Polivanoff is to be 'released' from the duties of Minister for War, possibly because he was not *persona grata*. Shuvaieff succeeds him.

I raised the question of a short leave to England, as there were many matters upon which I wanted to speak in person, but the Emperor was very much against my going for the present.

In conversation with him on appointments, he said he would much prefer a level-headed



Self going off in an observation balloon, Osovets.

man who was a good judge of men and knew how to work a good staff to a very brilliant man who centred too much in himself. He may have been ‘ leading up ’ to the appointment of his new War Minister.

29th March 1916.

The Emperor told me of reports in to say that the Germans had put Russian Jews in charge of Russian prisoners of war, and that it has annoyed and irritated the latter, some of whom have escaped—an incident which will not lighten the anti-Jewish feeling in Russia.

1*st April* 1916.

Great anger expressed over the sinking of a Russian Red Cross ship in the Black Sea. I was on board her when at Odessa, and it seems a most dastardly business, some of the nursing sisters having been drowned.

A visit to Riga and Reval, going out in one of our submarines from the latter place, took me away from Headquarters for a bit.

18*th April* 1916.

Returned to Headquarters from the Northern Front, when H.I.M. welcomed me

back, and at dinner I had to tell him all about my trip, and the warm corner in which Phillimore and I found ourselves on our visit to the front-line trenches.

He told me that on his own trip the enemy had dropped some bombs from an aeroplane very near his car, and then, referring to the Prince of Wales's visit to Egypt, said that he hoped he would keep out of danger. 'Although,' he said, 'I and my boy like to go to the front and see the troops, we have no right to expose ourselves too much'—quite forgetting the bombing incident of which he had just spoken.

He was very pleased at the news of taking of Trebizond, and then asked me what I thought of a visitor who had sat next him at lunch. 'Very clever, no doubt,' I said, 'but rather dry and dull.' 'Oh,' he answered, 'I am so relieved to hear you thought so, because I found him so intensely difficult to talk to.' He is always so anxious to be kind and hospitable.

19*th April* 1916.

The question of 'overseas' work in the war came up, and the opportunity presented itself to point out to the Emperor what a

heavy task fell upon the British Admiralty. Our country has to find transports for—

1. France (from England, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa).
2. East Africa (from England and from the Cape).
3. West Africa.
4. South-West Africa.
5. Mesopotamia (from England and from India).
6. Egypt (from England, India, Australia, New Zealand and the Cape).
7. Salonika.
8. India (taking out new regiments and returning with drafts, etc.)
9. French troops to Salonika.
10. Serbian troops to Salonika.

Supply ships for Serbians at Corfu.
Hospital ships for all the theatres of war (except the Russian and Italian).
Admiralty colliers.
Colliers for the French fleet.
Colliers for Italy.
Colliers for Russia.
Ships to carry grain, frozen meat, etc., from Canada, Australia, Argentine,

and Canadian horses for England and France.

Supply ships for all the British fleets.

Ammunition ships for above.

Ammunition ships for all the theatres of war.

Meanwhile seventy ships have been locked up in Archangel and Alexandrovsk all the winter.

Only large ships are included in the above, hundreds of small craft being employed on Admiralty service.

All the above falls upon the British Mercantile Marine.

Admiral Phillimore can speak for this, truly a 'gigantic task,' as the Emperor called it.

The Russians in general have little idea of the work which is being carried on by us in these matters.

They know more or less what our navy is doing, but do not realise what you might call the 'behind the scenes work' of our splendid Merchant and volunteer services at sea.

The moral of all above is not to talk lightly of carrying out 'side shows.'

It is a pity that war does not permit of some cinema illustration of British sea work.

22nd April 1916.

At dinner to-night the Emperor told me he had arranged for some Russian officers to go to the French front to be attached to our army.

We had a long talk, and stories followed, one that when he was in England for King George's wedding Sir Lynedoch Gardiner came up and gave the Prince of Wales (as he was then) an invitation to his own wedding, mistaking him for the Emperor.

Very sympathetic about poor Courtney Throckmorton, who married my niece and has just been killed.

He said he intended to make the Grand Duke Nicholas a Field-Marshal, but not yet awhile. Spoke in the most friendly way of him, of which I was very glad, after all the malicious gossip that flies about. Then about his uniform as a British Field-Marshal and how he should carry the bâton; said that he looked after all his various uniforms himself.

23rd April 1916.

A perfectly beautiful Easter morning. There had been a midnight service, and then we all paraded at the Imperial house, H.I.M.

presenting us each with china Easter eggs made by Fabergé.

Spring has jumped into summer, as it does in Canada.

10*th May* 1916.

Messrs Viviani and Thomas arrived on a visit from France, being entertained by H.I.M.

Much talk of the trial of Soukhomlinoff, the late Minister for War.

The Emperor was much amused to-day, though a little annoyed because the excessive keenness of our outpost troops here has led to one or two blunders. The Belgian general's servant was arrested by them, and when I was taking one of my rides in the country yesterday I was arrested myself. A regiment fresh from Petrograd was doing duty, and though I wore a Russian cap, as is our custom here, my British khaki uniform evidently puzzled the sentries, and notwithstanding my explanations and the presenting of my Russian visiting-card, the sergeant of the guard had me stopped, put under charge of an infantry soldier, who solemnly marched me back, loaded rifle very handy to him, and I was obliged to return with him ignominiously till, by a stroke of luck, after a mile of slow

march I met a gendarme who knew me and dispatched my captor back to his post with ‘a flea in his ear.’

11*th May* 1916.

The Emperor is a good deal worried over the question of the trial of Soukhomlinoff, the former Minister for War, and Count Fredericks is likely to be called as a witness for character, though he only knows of S. as having been formerly a military instructor, and nothing about his doings at the War Office, with which obviously F. had nothing to do.

14*th May* 1916.

Talked Peterhof and duck shooting with H.M., who got so keen about his description of the shooting there that he nearly knocked the wine bottle over in his illustrations.

He is much interested in the cinema which is being shown here of the taking of Erzeroum, and spoke in most cordial terms of the Grand Duke Nicholas's success, which gives great pleasure too to all of us who served with him over this side.

18th May 1916.

He is much annoyed by an 'unfortunate incident' which has lately occurred and by which the Russians lost guns, which can ill be spared, owing to the supporting troops being miles in rear.

The latest big batch of recruits are, he says, of an excellent type.

19th May 1916.

The Empress arrived yesterday and told me how pleased she had been with her visit to the British hospital at Petrograd, and what excellent work Lady Sybil Grey was doing there.

I found the Empress much easier to get on with than I expected, probably for the reason of her great love for my own country, and her custom of talking English constantly to the Emperor, and the many interests she had on matters upon which I was able to give her news or information.

When she told me how terribly shy she felt on coming into the room where we were all assembled—and it was a very large gathering, the chiefs of all the Allied military missions, the French, Belgian, Italian, Japanese, Serbian, and a galaxy of Russian

officers, with a sprinkling of Russian officials, both civil and diplomatic—I told her that the Emperor was always there, and then said laughingly to her: 'Your Majesty is so accustomed to visiting hospital cases and seeing operations that the best thing to do is to imagine to yourself that we are only "operation cases," and all will go well.'

It is probable that her own shyness, which gives the impression of aloofness, prevents people from talking to her and freezes up conversation.

The moment one began to laugh over things she brightened up and talk became easy and unaffected.

To-day being the Emperor's birthday we all attended a very beautiful service at the garrison church, after which there was a levée, I being the doyen leading in to wish the usual happy returns.

Sir Samuel Hoare arrived on a short visit.

At the birthday dinner I sat next the Empress, who told me a great deal of her hospitals, and of her gardens in the Crimea, from which the wonderful show of flowers which decorated the table came. The Emperor, who sat next the Empress, told me that she sent him flowers every day for his

room. They both talk English as their own ordinary means of conversation, and the Empress seemed very well and in good spirits. She asked a great deal about the Duke of Connaught and Canada, and curiously enough on return to my quarters I found a letter from H.R.H. from Canada.

20*th May* 1916.

The Emperor leaves for Odessa to see two newly formed divisions, and we have asked him to bring back the little Tsarevitch, who is a great favourite with us all, and a most happy-natured, attractive little fellow.

31*st May* 1916.

The Emperor had talked over the proposed visit of Lord Kitchener with the greatest keenness and interest. At the end of May I went into all details with Sir George Buchanan and Knox, the Military Attaché (now Major-General Sir Alfred Knox).

I never mentioned the matter to anyone except them, and Captain MacCaw, who was attached to me at Headquarters, and the Emperor, who had first informed me of the proposal.

One was obviously anxious about the journey, and it was evident that the less said about it the better.

On my return to Headquarters I found M. Trepoff, who is Minister of Railways and Communications, there, and after he had seen the Emperor I sat with him and had a long conversation on railway matters. He is a straight and able man—very keen.

1*st June* **1916.**

The Emperor again referred to Lord Kitchener's visit and his anxiety to see him. But he agreed that he wanted to do so much in so short a time that nothing but an aeroplane with telephone and shorthand writers attached would get him through to his satisfaction.

He added that it would be most acceptable to him to hear personally from Lord Kitchener his views on railway and transportation matters, of which he had such wide and valuable experience, and that it would be so helpful to his ministers and to Alexeieff to have a straight and full discussion on all these and relative questions for which any amount of cabling or writing never gave such satisfactory results as a personal interview.

'From what I have always heard,' he added, 'of Lord Kitchener, he is not a man who will hesitate to speak out and give us his views, even if they are not in entire accord with ours. He will also be able to go into the question of future operations with Alexeieff, who, I am sure, will be as frank as Lord Kitchener in expressing his views. We must, no doubt, have ideas which are not exactly similar in every step we take, but we have had no opportunity, as they constantly have in France, of first-hand discussion between two such representative men as Lord Kitchener and Alexeieff.'

I told the Emperor in answer that I did not think he need have any anxiety about Lord Kitchener's frank expression of views, at which he laughed, his reputation for speaking out being well known here; but I added that he would find Lord K. different from what he was very frequently represented to be, and that he was sure to get on well with all those with whom he should work in amicable relations, but that if he felt anyone was not worth working with we should no doubt hear of it, and that I should have no hesitation in telling him, if there were trouble in view, of the fact that H.M. had always

asked me to speak out, even if things seemed unacceptable.

The Emperor then said that Lord Kitchener was to have a perfectly free hand to see all he wished, as what was the good of a visit such as his except to improve the 'liaison' between us as far as possible, to have an exchange of ideas, to grasp our respective difficulties, and to remedy them wherever feasible.

Altogether he laid stress upon the visit as a great opportunity which should on no account be missed.

'We mean to beat the Germans,' he added, 'and the two heads of Kitchener and Alexeieff should have a good deal to say to it.'

From LORD KITCHENER *to* GENERAL HANBURY-WILLIAMS

LONDON,
2nd June 1916.

Personal.

M. Bark has stated to our Ambassador that he thinks that my visit had better be postponed as he has to start for France on 14th June. I ought to arrive in Petrograd according to arrangements about 11th June,

which would give me time to tell Mr Bark all the financial points which I have to communicate to him before he has to leave.

Owing to the military situation I cannot hope to have another chance of visiting Russia, so if my visit is postponed it will have to be put off altogether.

Would you ascertain whether underlying the action of Mr Bark there is any desire that I should not come, in which case, of course, I should not think of doing so.

From MYSELF *to* LORD KITCHENER

G.H.Q. RUSSIAN ARMIES,
3rd June 1916.

Private and Personal.

Your telegram of the 2nd was only received this morning. I thought it best to speak to the Emperor direct, while avoiding any danger of putting him in the position of being obliged to answer at once. I had a private and personal interview. Explained position in regard to dates, named by you, and though I made it clear that if you did not come now you could not come at all, I at the same time said perfectly frankly that I knew you would not come if it was

felt that your visit would be in any way embarrassing or entail extra work and make difficulties for anyone.

I begged H.M. twice not to give me his answer immediately, but to turn the matter over in his mind, consult anyone he wished, and advise me of result later. He repeated twice that he wished you to come, he thought your visit one of importance and would be of benefit to both countries. Under the circumstances I trust that my action is approved and that you will hold to your arrangements. I think it would be well to make it clear in other quarters that you will give Mr Bark plenty of time to talk to you, and that your visit is not only on purely financial matters, but on matters of interest to both Allies.

You will forgive my making suggestions, but I have given the matter most careful consideration and can but express my purely personal views.

Am keeping your communication absolutely between H.M. and me, though he may of course discuss it with others.

His answer is, however, quite decided and I see no prospect of its being altered.

HANBURY-WILLIAMS.

I remember that night of the 3rd June so well.

I lay on the uncomfortable little camp cot in the corner of my room, screened off by some fusty and hideous old curtains and tired out slept straight off.

Then at about 3 A.M. I woke up, lit the candle and thought a bit. I can see the room now, with what my friends called my picture gallery on the walls—all the funny sketches from *Punch*, and Bairnsfather's out of *The Bystander*, which I always kept to make me laugh when things were going badly. The two great white stoves at either corner, then by my writing-table pictures from the illustrated papers of the King and Queen and Kitchener, the Emperor and the little Tsarevitch, and some sporting pictures and a copy of Jorrocks.

The night was warm and I could scent the varying odours of the Jew shops just opposite my windows, and of the almost dirtier streets between, but there was silence on those awful cobble-stones which would almost echo the steps of a cat upon them except in the winter, when one only heard the sleigh bells. I was more or less 'salted' to smells in those days and they didn't

worry me, but I began saying to myself: 'Have I done the right thing?'

It was not fear of the responsibility that I had to take, for I should never have changed my mind about that, and I know that if Lord Kitchener could reappear now he would agree, but I suppose an uncanny premonition of trouble. And so I got up and walked round my pictures and laughed and turned in again and slept till daylight or later, and woke up satisfied that I couldn't have done otherwise.

If ever I see the Hotel Bristol at Mohileff again, what a crowd of memories that room would bring to me. It was there that I got the news of my eldest boy's death and of Kitchener's.

But there were some happy memories with it as well, till the news came to me there of the revolution and of the end which I felt certain was at hand of Russia as a fighting factor for the Allied cause.

And it was in that room that poor Prince Galitzin, as good a sportsman and gallant a soldier and friend as ever lived, came to tell me that the Grand Duke Nicholas was leaving, 'no Romanoffs being any longer required' in the army in which he had served so long, so faithfully and so well.

I came back to it after my visit to the Emperor, no longer Emperor, and again after I had bid him the last farewell.

Yes, there are a lot of ghosts in that room for me.

3rd June 1916.

The King's birthday and the Emperor referred to it at lunch and drank H.M.'s health.

6th June 1916.

The Emperor took me for a short walk in the garden, and I told him of a conversation I had with the C.I.G.S. on the question of liaison matters between us and Russia, the importance of strengthening them, and he promised he would go into the matter with Alexeieff again.

Alexeieff is looking tired and worn out, centralises too much, I am told, and it is difficult to get at him, and no wonder, with our collection of Allied representatives all wanting to do so. The Emperor is, of course, most kind and accessible, and sees, I think, that A. is tired, but one cannot go to H.I.M. about everything. It would be incorrect and foolish, as the Chief of the Staff, especially

in this case, is the right person to see and to be kept informed, and it has only been in special and almost personal matters that I have ever been to the Emperor without telling Alexeieff.

7th June 1916.

To-day like a thunderclap came the terrible news about Kitchener. One can hardly believe it, but there seems no doubt, though we do not know whether it was a mine or submarine or what actually happened.

The Emperor came up to me and said: 'How I wish I hadn't felt obliged to encourage him to come, but it is the fortune of war.'

The Emperor still very deeply concerned about Kitchener, and told me that he had received such a splendid telegram from our King about it.

All the Allies and the Staff came to call on me, and offered their sympathies, and in the evening the Emperor gave me a most kind and sympathetic message from the Empress about it, speaking not only of K., but of all those who accompanied him.

It being her Majesty's birthday, one tried to put that forward as the topic instead of

one's personal troubles, and the Emperor spoke so much of her telling me incidentally that she had been engaged to someone else before him and that the aspirant had given way.

The little Tsarevitch has been promoted to rank of full corporal in the army and is very proud of his stripes and more mischievous than ever.

9th June 1916.

The Emperor very keen to know who is likely to succeed Kitchener at the War Office. Possibly Derby, but I have heard nothing yet. He told me that the Empress had sent me a lot of flowers, specially chosen for me, which is very kind. On return to my room I found it full of roses, sweet-peas, orchids, etc., very refreshing in this place where one hardly ever sees a flower.

10*th June* 1916.

All very pleased with the successes against the Austrians, it being reported that we have taken over 64,000 prisoners since the offensive began.

At lunch the Tsarevitch pushed all the cups, bread, toast, menus, etc., which he

could get hold of across to me and then called the attention of his father to count all the pieces I had.

13*th June* 1916.

I am afraid from all I gather that the reports about food, transportation, fuel, etc., which reach the Emperor are too rosy coloured. It is not so much a question of the stuff itself, but of the transportation.

The reports of individual departments may be right, but there must be a lack of cohesion, intensified, of course, by all the demands, both civil and military. Prisoners of war, I suppose, are used, but the Jewish population, which is very great, is useless in this respect.

Resulting on these difficulties lies the danger of riots and revolution. New railway lines are not much use without rolling stock, but something will have to be done, because even with victorious armies you must have a more or less contented population behind you, and should the war drag on after next winter the danger will become very great.

Had Lord Kitchener been with us just now his wide experience of these matters would have been invaluable, as he would have come

with an unbiassed mind and given a very authoritative and straight opinion.

We, who have been here some time, and are always sticking pins in about the business, grow to be looked upon almost with a sort of 'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes' suspicion, for fear that we may have some axe of our own to grind, there being such a number of those axes in this country. I had a case in point when in order to push on some important railway work I suggested a firm of whose good work I had experience in other lands.

One of my best Russian friends came to me and said: "If you want to push that business along, don't on any account suggest a British contractor—it will be suspected that you have some "pull" in connection with it.' He laughed at the idea himself, and I laughed still more, never having had a pull in any business that I can remember in my life, and certainly not brought it off if I had.

16*th June* 1916.

Another lot of most welcome flowers arrived from the Empress, for which I thanked the Emperor, with whom I talked over the Salonika difficulties which I had

discussed with Alexeieff as to men, shipping, clothing and so on, in fact the whole business, which seems hardly appreciated by those who are ill acquainted with the transportation of men and horses and stores by sea, let alone the question of weakening our lines in France.

27th June 1916.

I had a meeting the other day with Alexeieff and one of his staff on a strategical question regarding which we were somewhat at variance. I had been fully instructed as to the arguments which I had to use and indeed knew the whole question by heart. Just before I left for our talk a long telegram came in for me, so I left word with my staff officer that if he found that it affected my business with Alexeieff he should bring it in to me. Just as I had finished my oration and produced my trump card, as it were, in came the message. It was a complete reversal of previous arrangements, so nothing remained for me but to climb down at once and as gracefully as I could, but sudden changes of this kind serve to enfeeble one's arguments in future.

I take comfort from the fact that no doubt

many others suffer as I do. I suppose a clever diplomatist would have left a loophole of escape. I had left none.

But I think the authorities concerned, even if they had no sympathy with me, would at least have had some admiration for the fine flow of language which I used on return to my quarters.

Towards the end of June it was arranged that I should go home on a short leave, an old friend of mine, Brigadier-General Waters, taking my place in my absence. I submitted the matter to the Emperor and to Alexeieff.

H.I.M. readily acceded to the proposal, but said: 'I make one condition, so far as I am concerned, and that is, that you return as soon as possible.'

Alexeieff also sent me a most kind letter as follows:—

Mon cher Général,—Je me suis entretenu avec vous bien volontiers, voyant en vous non pas 'le répresentant des difficultés,'[1] mais un homme d'idées fermes et arrêtées.

J'attendrai votre retour avec l'espoir de continuer amicalement notre travail commun jusqu'a l'issu que nous souhaitons.

[1] The expression I had used of myself in my letter to him.

Bien entendu, en votre absence, je serai heureux de m'entretenir avec le General Waters.

Les opérations qui sont commencés doivent changer essentiellement la situation. De leur issue seule dependront nos projets ulterieurs. En ce moment tous nos efforts doivent tendre a l'exécution et a la réussite de nos entreprises actuelles.

Avant votre départ—j'exposerai au Général Robertson quelques considérations sur la situation générale.

Veuillez agréer l'expression de ma profonde estime et de mon sincère dévouement.

(*Sd.*) ALEXEIEFF.

8th July 1916.

Some more beautiful flowers sent me by the Empress.

10th July 1916.

The Tsarevitch is here and in great spirits. He dragged some of us off after lunch in the tent to a round fountain in the garden which has porpoise heads all round it, with two holes in each to represent the eyes. The game was to plug up these holes with one's fingers, then turn on the fountain full split

and suddenly let go. The result was that I nearly drowned the Emperor and his son, and they returned the compliment, and we all had to go back and change, laughing till we nearly cried, a childish amusement no doubt, but which did one good all the same.

12*th July* 1916.

At lunch sat next to Sazonoff, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and opposite the Emperor. We talked of South Africa, as he asked me about my time out there and whether I had ever seen Kruger, and so on. I explained that I had been there with Sir Alfred Milner and was at the last conference with Kruger before the war. He talked of the astonishing co-operation in which we had worked with the Boers since the war (which war he had always thought would be a necessity) and had prophesied that we should make them good partners in the British Empire. Then he added: 'We are going to do the same with Poland.'

14*th July* 1916.

The Emperor spoke to me last night about Rumania and munitions which should be dispatched there the moment they give

guarantees of coming in with us. He said he had sent the Grand Duke Serge to Archangel and that results, and good results, were already showing themselves in consequence of his visit.

He then told me that he had made up his mind to do away with the German official names given to certain departments of his Court and so on.

He knew that a great many of his subjects thought that these and other things meant German influence in Russia, and hoped that such changes would tend to prove that these ideas were illusory and false.

He was quite determined that all connections of this kind with Germany should be cut off once for all.

Old Count Fredericks told me after dinner that the increasing democratic views of the Russians made it of the greatest importance that the alliance with us should not only be firm but lasting, as we, though thoroughly democratic, stood firm to the monarchical system, which he felt was of the greatest importance in a country like Russia, that to his dying day he would do his best to get his royal master to strengthen the alliance with us and so far as possible to adopt our methods. Poland, he added, would be a commencement.

Though old, he is shrewd, loyal and devoted to his Emperor, but with an appreciation of the more liberal ideas in Russia which need attention and assistance. He was always watching, he said, for what might be the situation in Russia after the war, for the care necessary in making democratic institutions, not to make them too suddenly, though he quite recognised that much must be done to avoid the risks of revolution.

[NOTE.—Thus all had spoken to me at various times of Russian good intentions towards Poland, the Emperor, Sazonoff, Fredericks, but reaction and intrigue, which had hung the business up right away from the time when I had been with the Grand Duke Nicholas (though through no fault of the latter), eventually gained the day.]

17*th July* 1916.

The Emperor has made a new appointment to the Black Sea Fleet—Koltchak—and I sat next him last night, a quiet, keen and attractive man, who will, one hopes, get a bit of a hustle on there, as it is badly wanted.

[*N.B.*—The Admiral's history afterwards is well known.]



The Emperor, with Chiefs of Allied Military Missions, at Mohileff. 1916.

19th July 1916.

Reported to-day from German sources that a German naval officer had told a well-known person that he had been 'on the submarine that sunk the *Hampshire*.'

20th July 1916.

The rumoured retirement of Sazonoff reached me to-day. There have apparently been intrigues against him, possibly with regard to his Polish policy, and, as an old friend put it to me: 'Ils veulent tous lui faire casser la tête.'

He added that unless Russia gave proof of good-will to Poland by a measure of self-government German intrigues would increase, and that S. had a lot of business on his hands at this moment which, if left alone, he would carry through successfully.

The matter was not within my province save so far as I was asked to do what I could in the business, and that such an important 'change of horses' at this moment might have a deterrent effect on the military situation.

For a moment there seemed to be a chance of a reconsideration of the decision.

Received a message from Petrograd telling

me of the reported removal of Sazonoff from his post and asking me to assist in preventing such an unfortunate change as is apparently proposed.

The Emperor was away at the station to meet the Empress, so I went to see F. We had a long conversation. I told him that he and I had always had a complete understanding when difficulties arose—to which he entirely agreed—and that this seemed a difficulty which would require all the patience and care possible to save a situation which I knew soldiers—speaking for myself—and diplomatists among the Allies would look upon as very lamentable if it came about with a wrong issue—that there were questions of Rumania and Poland (the latter of which M. Sazonoff had spoken to me about only a few days ago, as had the Emperor), and that both questions affected the military situation.

He (F.) knew as well as I did that German influences had had full play too long in Russia, and that the dismissal of a man of the type of Sazonoff would give cause for talk which might have most mischievous results, and would be a moral victory for the enemy influences which worked behind the scenes.

He (F.) had frequently talked to me about the importance of consolidating the alliance, and I felt that that purpose could not better be served than by the retention of S.

F. said : ' I will speak to you quite frankly, and I am glad you came to me, because I know better than anyone what is going on. There have been, and are, intrigues going on against Sazonoff, and these among ministers and highly placed persons, who dread anything approaching self-government for Poland, and the more democratic forms of government, such as exist in the dominions of your Empire.

'If we do not support Sazonoff, especially in this Polish business, we shall be playing into the hands of the enemy, who—I know personally—are doing all they can to give the Poles the impression that our promises are " but pie-crust," and that nothing will come of them.

' Apart from that, I believe all that you say about S.'s good work in establishing very friendly relations with your country a matter of the first importance. I am determined to do all that I can in aiding that and shall die happy if they are brought about.'

Later in the afternoon he telephoned me that he had delivered my message personally to the Emperor.

21st July 1916.

The influences brought to bear against Sazonoff have been too strong and he is to go.

H.I.M. spoke to me about Sazonoff's retirement. He said: 'I know you are worrying about something, I can tell it by your face, and I suppose it is about Sazonoff.'

'No, sir, the appointment of Minister for Foreign Affairs is none of my business, but it does seem an unfortunate time to "change horses," when there is a great deal of specially important work on hand, and it might thus affect the military situation. All I have done in the question has simply been as an intermediary.'

'I can assure you,' he answered, 'that he was in bad health, and that the change will make not the slightest difference in continuity of policy.'

23rd July 1916.

I had an opportunity of thanking the Empress, next to whom I was at dinner, for her kind and continual gifts of flowers to me.

She leaves again to-morrow in her Red Cross car.

The Empress walked in to-night, looking like a beautiful picture, with her daughters. Hers is the only sad face in the family, but it lightens up when she comes by and greets one. To-night, however, she looked as if she had been suffering and was anxious about something.

As I was next to her at dinner, I asked her if she had been working very hard.

She said No, but that she had trouble from her heart and that it alarmed her. Not knowing much of illness of this kind, I merely said that I knew of one case where the person concerned had found that it was merely a muscular trouble and soon passed off.

It seems extraordinary how little it takes to cheer her up, for the conversation turned off on to the subject of pictures and Verestchagin's work, and till the end of dinner she seemed quite happy.

It is a very curious character, a devoted wife and mother, and yet acting under bad influences which react on her, on all that belong to her and her own country.

She is so proud of Russia and so anxious that the Allies should win the war, and yet,

without being aware of it, carrying out bad advice in the selection of advisers and others. War to her seems almost more terrible, if such a thing is possible, than to other people. But she spoke of it to me as the 'passing out of darkness into the light of *victory.*' '*Victory* we must have.'

25*th July* 1916.

I raised the question of Archangel again, as I hear there is no improvement in matters there, notwithstanding the visit referred to above.

The Emperor told me at dinner that the Empress had sent me her best wishes in her daily telegram to him.

29*th July* 1916.

I received a message desiring me to speak to the Emperor on the proposal to award the G.C.B. to Sazonoff, and immediately after our lunch in the big tent in the gardens of his house his Majesty asked me to come for a walk in the garden.

We strolled along the path overlooking the Dnieper, and as we walked I gave him my message.

He stopped at once, turned to me and said: 'I am delighted that Sazonoff's excellent work should thus be honoured by the King. No one more deserves such a high mark of appreciation for the heavy task which he has carried out so faithfully and well, and it is a high compliment to this country as well as to him. I only hope he will soon recover sufficiently to render further services to us.'

4th August 1916.

The Emperor received an official telegram from our King on the second anniversary of the war.

I went with him to his room afterwards and he showed me his answer. The message had given him great pleasure.

He is, as he says, equally determined to fight to a finish.

8th August 1916.

We were talking the other day about cavalry and the part they had played in the war. The Emperor said and maintained that they had been very useful in this country, though my friend, de Ryckel, the Belgian general, thought the days of cavalry were numbered. Next day a wire came to

say that some of ours had had a 'good look-in.' So I mentioned it to H.I.M., and we chaffed our Belgian friend a good deal.

This morning H.I.M. sent me *The Daily Graphic* of 24th July with a front-page picture of the Deccan Horse before and after a charge, and written in blue chalk on one side of it: 'Something for old de Ryckel.'

(I still have this little reminiscence of those days lying before me.)

10*th August* 1916.

I had a long talk to H.I.M. on the financial situation as between Russia and ourselves, one of the many matters upon which, though not properly my business, I had been asked to discuss with him.

It was a somewhat intricate question, but one which needed the straight speaking which he always permitted to me, and which served to clear the air.

15*th August* 1916.

I lunched with the Emperor and Empress, both most kind in urging me to come back as soon as possible. After lunch I walked up and down for a long time with him in the garden, and he gave me various letters and

messages from him and the Empress to take to England.

As he said good-bye, he added : ‘ Tell them in England of our good feeling for them all and of the high appreciation felt here of the splendid work of the British Navy and Army. They must not believe any stories which go about trying to make mischief between the two countries.

‘ We mean to fight this war out to the end with our good Allies. And the only peace we shall agree to will be one that will do us all honour together when once we have achieved victory.’

The Empress spoke of the education of children, and how anxious she was that her daughters should be simple and unaffected, that in England girls had so many opportunities of healthy out-of-door amusements, and moved about more.

She told me that we must not spoil the little boy, and I assured her that we wouldn’t ; indeed he was not the sort that is easily spoiled, and his tutor kept him in good discipline.

She feared that the war would sadden their lives, but at the same time saw quite clearly that an experience such as we were

going through would impress them without leaving too lasting a sad memory.

'What a responsibility,' she said, 'for those who started this awful war, killing, wounding, suffering, and the dark shadows thrown over young lives, which ought to have nothing but brightness.' She at first could not believe the stories that came from Belgium of the treatment of the civil population by the enemy. 'But now we have proofs, and no punishment can be strong enough for the offenders. Your English soldiers would scorn such ideas of treating even the worst of their enemies in this way.'

This afternoon, accompanied by my faithful Russian orderly, Missi, I left for England. Dined on the train with Admiral Russin, the Naval C.G.S. at Headquarters, and seeing something of the Grand Duke Dmitri Paulovitch on the journey to Petrograd.

26*th August* 1916.

Reached King's Cross at 6 A.M.

26*th August to* 7*th October* 1916.

In the short six weeks' leave which I spent in England, with the exception of a ten days'

trip to the French front, I was pretty fully occupied.

I left at midnight for Bergen on 7th October and reached my old room at Headquarters of the Armies at Mohileff on the 18th October.

18*th October* 1916.

On arrival found it was the Tsarevitch's 'name day,' the Emperor receiving me most kindly at lunch and saying we must have a good talk over my trip.

19*th October* 1916.

My birthday and also that of General Janin, my good friend of the French military mission.

Sir George Buchanan, Lindley, Grenfell and Blair arrived with the G.C.B. for the Emperor.

They were received in due course, and after they had left the Emperor sent for me and again welcomed me back.

20*th October* 1916.

The Empress here, and I sat next to her at lunch, when we had a long talk about my visit to England, a country for which she

has such great affection and in which she takes so much interest. She also wanted to know all about my family, and especially of the two boys (the elder whom I left, I fear, not far from the end, and the younger one who was so badly wounded). She is indeed most kind, sympathetic and thoughtful for others. She told me that she had not been at all well herself, nerves and heart trouble.

What a difference it would make to Russia if she had good health and nerves.

The Emperor sent for me after lunch and assured me that all was right in Russia, and determination to continue the war to the bitter end as firm as ever. He quite realises the importance, he says, of helping Rumania, and hopes that some forward action from Salonika will help.

He trusts that any rumours as to a premature peace on the part of Russia will be treated for what they are worth, which is nothing. Enemy intrigue is at the bottom of these rumours.

He is as fully determined as are his armies to continue the struggle until victory is assured. Idle gossip in some centres, such as Petrograd, is not worth heeding, and he hoped

that no one in England would be affected by it. German and enemy intrigue was the cause of all the malicious talk.

The Empress had been equally keen in her anxiety for the success of the Allies, and I hope this reassuring report will continue. I told the Emperor that I hoped the Empress would have a long rest, as she seemed overwrought.

I see no prospect of any further advance from here this winter. And winter in Russia is the anxious time.

24*th October* 1916.

The Empress sent me some more flowers, and asked if she could see my children's photographs, which I managed to produce, and the next day when I was with the Emperor at dinner he told me that she was sending me a photo of herself and the little boy. He also told me that he hoped if my son came over with a 'bag,' which there was an idea of his doing when sufficiently recovered from his wound, that he must come and see him. We talked over the Rumanian situation, which is far from happy. The railway arrangements between Russia and Rumania in a hopeless muddle.

28th October 1916.

At the Emperor's dinner I sat next M. Bark, the Russian Finance Minister, whom I much like. He has a clear head, and though no doubt fights well for the interests of his own country, is very frank and friendly in his dealings with us.

29th October 1916.

The Emperor spoke to me at dinner about Constantinople, the situation regarding which seems more or less assured.

30th October 1916.

At dinner the Emperor told me that one of the Russian divisions in Rumania had been reduced to 600 men in the recent fighting. He then discussed 'tempers,' and said that he rarely lost his, but when it was bad 'it was very, very bad.' He added how much he had missed me while I was away, and spoke most kindly of Waters at the same time.

He leaves to-morrow for Tsarskoye Selo, and asked whether Locker Lampson's armoured cars could go to Rumania.

5th November 1916.

On our way to Tarnopol yesterday during a visit to that front we stopped at a large ‘ canteen ’ run by a Princess Wolkonsky, who has been at work ever since the beginning of the war, and entertained many thousands of soldiers. She has an estate quite near, and most of the canteen supplies are her own produce. Some time ago when this neighbourhood was clearer of the enemy the Empress and the Tsarevitch had visited the canteen, the plates they had used being preserved on the wall, and every soldier who came in was shown them.

The Princess told me that her head steward had been badly wounded and sent home during the war, and when she went to welcome him and have the wound properly attended to, she inquired after his injury. ‘ Oh,’ he answered, ‘ the wound—that is nothing; but think what has happened—I have seen the Emperor, and he spoke to me, think of that.’ If this is a sign of the times, it is a good one.

14th November 1916.

On my return from a visit to Brussiloff and his armies I gave the Emperor an account of the trip.

He told me that Alexeieff was not at all well and he thought he ought to take a bit of leave. After dinner I was asked to his room, when I presented him with the photograph of Lord Kitchener which Sir George Arthur had sent. Then discussed a message from our Ambassador in which he had asked me to speak to H.I.M. regarding an announcement on Constantinople. (I looked back to the Quetta days again in 1885 and 'the Russians shall not have Constantinople.')

He quite appreciated the proposal, and as soon as Sturmer and the Ambassador have settled it an announcement will be made.

More chrysanthemums and other flowers from the Empress.

16*th November* 1916.

Some of the soldiers' wives at home have sent in some extraordinary letters about allowances for babies, and extracts were sent me which I showed to the Emperor, who was much amused, especially with that which said: 'I have just had a baby, what am I to do about it?'

He told me that he had received a telegram at 4 P.M. to say that the Murman railway is joined up, and should be in working order in

six weeks, which I hope will 'pan out' all right.

Brussiloff had told me that he gave the Germans six months to hold out on the present harvest, then, two months more very badly off for food, then three months more to the final collapse—roughly, about a year. All this makes our pushing on of the railway important for munitions and other supplies, if he was correct. He had also said he thought the days of cavalry were numbered and that future warfare would be conducted in the same way as at present, plus use of a number of chemical and mechanical discoveries.

20*th November* 1916.

The Grand Duke Nicholas arrived from the Caucasus with his brother, the Grand Duke Peter. We all met at lunch with the Emperor, who appeared very pleased to see the victor of the fighting on the Turkish front.

I went down in the afternoon and spent some time with the Grand Duke Nicholas, who was as kind and cordial as ever. He seemed happy as to the prospects in his theatre of war, though he remarked how unlucky it was that just the weather which

suited his operations there was wrong for those of the British forces in Mesopotamia. He looked very well, and will, we all hope, continue to be successful.

The Emperor told me afterwards how glad he was to see him and to hear all the news of 'his excellent work.'

He spoke so cordially about him that it is hard to believe all these stories about jealousy, etc.

22*nd November* 1916.

A good crop of rumours about—unrest in the country, trouble in the Duma, Sturmer accused of being pro-German, and a Russian officer, a friend of mine, tells me he is very unhappy about matters generally.

One of the generals who was in command of a corps last year told me that in the retreat before the Germans his men had only five cartridges apiece.

He has now a command near here and says that the 'graft' and swindling by contractors is very bad. He is, he says, surrounded by people who come to him with *gueules ouvertes* to get what they can out of him.

The arrival of Valentine of our Flying

Service enabled me to have a talk to H.I.M. on this important matter and the promotion of young officers as soon as possible, youth being very essential at this business.

Ivanoff, between whom and the Emperor I was sitting, was in entire agreement. Sturmer and Trepoff, the Minister for Railways, were also of the party.

23*rd November* 1916.

Sturmer being the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and his appointment not having given much pleasure in Russia, conversation was rather limited, as he sat on the other side of the Emperor. Trepoff, whom I knew and like, seems pleased about railway matters, and I only hope he is not too optimistic. He is very keen, and everyone I know has a good opinion of him, but his task is a very difficult one. Sturmer is near the end of his tether.

24*th November* 1916.

General Gourko, Admiral G. (who, report says, will take Sturmer's place), General Russki and Gilinski dined with the Emperor, who told me he had a high opinion of Gourko,

a good leader of men in the field, a very experienced man of affairs. His Majesty told me that he felt sure I should like him. [*N.B.*—Which proved very true.—J. H.-W.]

Gilinski has been attached to the French Army up till now, is very proud of the K.C.M.G. conferred on him by the King, but he has now been recalled here.

Trepoff succeeds Sturmer. 'Dieu merci!' my neighbour at dinner said.

H.I.M. tells me of a proposed visit of certain distinguished Allies to Russia. Gourko, whom we all like, is to take over from Alexeieff during the latter's leave.

We then talked over Salonika, the conference in France and other matters.

Discussing the 'Angels at Mons' story, he said that one of his daughters was talking to a wounded Russian soldier at about the same time as the Mons episode and that he told her during the débâcle in the beginning of the war, after the advance in E. Prussia, they had seen the Virgin Mary.

I showed the Emperor the June number of *The Times History of the War*, which Wilton of *The Times* had kindly sent me. By a curious coincidence there are on opposite pages pictures of the Ambassador, Sir George

Buchanan, sitting in his room at the Embassy close to the portrait of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, the former Ambassador of Catherine's time, and of the Emperor talking to me. The latter is described as 'General Williams speaking to the Emperor at Petrograd.' A wrong description as far as the locality went, as it was really at Army Headquarters, but it is a coincidence that I should appear in 1916 with my ancestor of 1754.

27th November 1916.

The Empress-Mother's birthday. H.I.M. went to dine with the Empress, and I was able to send a message of thanks for more flowers.

Gourko came to my room after dinner and we had a long talk.

28th November 1916.

Sat next the Empress at lunch, when she seemed in really good spirits and as kind as ever, asked a great deal about my wounded son, and seemed hopeful about the war. The Emperor saw me before lunch about Constantinople, Rumania, etc.

29th November 1916.

After lunch to-day had a regular football scrimmage with the little Tsarevitch, who was in wild spirits.

1st December 1916.

Their Majesties both congratulated on Queen Alexandra's birthday, and drank her Majesty's health.

3rd December 1916.

The Emperor told me how sorry he was at Phillimore's departure, which to me is a very great loss.

I told the Emperor that I had written home to the following effect :—

'The enemy are straining every nerve through their usual methods to create internal trouble in Russia, to spread dissatisfaction in the army and induce bad feeling against the British Empire. They are well aware of Russian difficulties regarding railways and transport, with the resulting danger to food and fuel supplies, meaning a hard task for the government if they wish to get through the crucial winter-time without serious trouble.'

He told me that he was constantly urging

attention to these matters, but I fear he is given too 'rosy' reports upon them.

Trepoff had, he said, made a strong speech in the Duma regarding the continuance of the war, which he hoped would have a good effect.

5th December 1916.

Both Emperor and Empress were present at a cinema performance for the soldiers and were very well received.

In the evening I had a long talk to the Empress, who spoke of the necessity for people keeping cheerful and not losing their heads over the length of the war, which she was convinced would end in the victory of 'our Allied forces.'

After dinner she beckoned to me to come up and talk to her again. I crossed the room to the piano, where we stood alone. H.I.M. then referred to the wicked slanders that were being spread about in the large towns, but hoped that the recent utterances of Ministers on 'both sides of the water' would convince people of the firm determination of the Allies to see the war through to the bitter end.

She then said: 'You are, I hear, going up to Petrograd on a short visit soon?'

'Yes, your Majesty, I hope to pay a visit and see the Ambassador and hear the news up there.'

'Well, promise me if you go that you will not believe all the wicked stories that are being gossiped about there.'

It gave me the opportunity to say something which I had in my mind, and which could not have been said had not the opportunity offered itself. It was on my lips when the Emperor came up laughing and said: 'What are you two plotting about in the corner?'

The conversation broke off, as they then bid us good-night and I left.

[*N.B.*—That was the last occasion upon which I saw the Empress. No doubt if I had spoken my words would not have had much effect, but I had been urged to do so by someone much concerned, and had never expected to have the chance.]

6th to 18*th December* 1916.

During this fortnight the Emperor was away. I saw much of General Gourko, a first-class, keen soldier, and we are lucky to have him to take Alexeieff's place while the

latter is away. Gourko is a 'man of the world,' apart from other good qualities.

9th December 1916.

The Emperor at Petrograd, and I hope will return looking better than when he left, as he appeared tired and worried.

At noon to-day we went off to an open-air service to celebrate St George's Day. Stood in the open at 10° below zero with hats off, which was cooling to the brains, to put it mildly.

After the service the Battalion of St George marched past, all magnificent men who have got the 'Cross' and been wounded some time or other during the war, followed by a lot of discharged old soldiers. The sprinkling of holy water by the bishop must have been chilly work. Then lunched with the officers of the Battalion, sitting down at 12.30, and the earliest departures being at 3 P.M.

How they all manage to carry on with their work under these conditions is a marvel, but one officer told me that after the 'Artillery Feast Day,' which was yesterday, he left at 4 A.M.

More exercise and less sitting up would do them a lot of good.

11*th December* 1916.

A friend told me quite innocently that two strangers who were at the 'Staff' lunch to-day were representatives of '*la pêche et la chasse.*' As a matter of fact, he was about right, as they were Civil Servants collecting evidence against Soukhomlinoff, the late Minister for War, whose '*pêches*' have resulted in his '*chasse.*'

19*th December* 1916.

I sat next the Emperor, who had returned last night, at dinner. Very interested in the change of Cabinet in England. Asked me about Kitchener's prophecy that Germany would make peace proposals in November.

To-day, being his Majesty's name day, we all went to a service in the church, and a levée was held afterwards at which I delivered congratulatory messages from the King and Imperial Forces, the Ambassador and so on.

I sent over Thompson Seton's books which I had got for the Tsarevitch.

20*th December* 1916.

I heard the news of death of my eldest son, which was not unexpected. I was in the ante-room next the Emperor's before

dinner, when, being alone, the little Tsarevitch came out of his father's room, ran up to me and sat next me, saying: 'Papa told me to come to sit with you as he thought you would feel lonely to-night.'

The Emperor himself most kind and sympathetic, saying, as was his nature, just the right thing.

I spoke to him of my going up to Petrograd for a few days, to which he quite agreed.

A most kind telegram from the Empress:

'Accept my heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow. God help you to bear this heavy trial and send consolation and strength to your poor wife.—ALEXANDRA.'

30*th December* 1916.

This evening while Charlie Burn, a very old friend whom I was glad to have with me, was sitting in my room (at the Hotel Astoria at Petrograd), I was rung up by Wilton of *The Times*:

'They have got him at last, General.'

I guessed to whom he referred.

It was the end of Rasputin.

The year 1917 opened with the death of Rasputin as the talk of Russia.

So much has been written about this notorious scamp that it would only be a tiresome repetition to give a sketch of him here.

He was never allowed to come to the Headquarters of the Armies in the Field.

A brief summary, however, of what I gathered about him, touching as it does, unfortunately, on the life of the Empress, is almost necessary.

As I spent most of my time at Headquarters or in the field, I only paid occasional visits to Petrograd, and naturally did not endeavour to see him, or make inquiries on a question which, being in the mouths of everyone, was sufficiently discussed and talked about to make further probing into it unnecessary.

Since those days I have come to the following conclusions:—

His influence over the Empress was undoubted. It arose over the history of the birth of her son—a son being granted to her, she thought, owing to the prayers of this wicked and wandering monk.

The delicate health of the young heir was the cause of great anxiety to her, and she placed all her faith on Rasputin to keep the boy in health.

It is possible that he had some of the qualities of a 'nerve specialist,' and either through attendance on the invalid, or by his influence over the mother, induced the latter to believe that he was indispensable for her boy's sake.

So gradually he became her adviser on matters of state, and through the Empress his influence affected the Emperor.

How much he was a paid agent of the enemy it is difficult to say, but there is no doubt that he received money from some sources which did good work for Germany at the time, and bad for Russia.

There seems but little doubt that his principal agent at Court was, wilfully or not, the celebrated Madame Vouirobova, who was very rarely away from the Empress.

The known influence he exercised over the Empress, and thus upon the Emperor, made him the court of appeal for all those intriguers and place-seekers who had their own axes to grind, and knew full well that here was a means of assuring their success. No doubt, wherever the money came from, whether from German sources or others, it became well spent by those who, for their nefarious purposes, brought about, by 'slow

drops of poison,' as it were, the ruin of Russia.

The public scandal reached its climax in 1916, when he was 'removed' to other spheres, and of the two spheres there can be but little doubt in which he reposes.

And yet it always seems to me, in going back over past history, that the death of Rasputin, however desirable it was on moral and other grounds, was the factor leading to the final débâcle of the Romanoffs.

Instead of saving Russia, by another of the ironies of fate which have pursued that great and unfortunate country, it helped to ruin it.

Looking at all the facts coldly and dispassionately, it seems possible that if this 'happy dispatch' had been postponed till a little later—after the war—Russia might have been spared the terrible blow which loyal Russians felt in the desertion by their country of the Allied cause.

But one thing must always be remembered—his dealings with the Empress were those of a bad adviser, an imaginary saint, who she believed, alas! had the interests of her country and of her son at heart.

Some stories of the many published about

him were absolutely untrue and unjustified, except to those who wished for a lucrative result from them.

An unscrupulous blackguard, posing as a saint, and, owing to the cures which he apparently effected on the little Tsarevitch, trusted and believed in by the Empress, whose love for her son and naturally nervous temperament made her an easy prey to advice and suggestions from Rasputin affecting political and other appointments, on which she in her turn over-persuaded the Emperor.

The scandals which he had caused led to tales of worse ones, most of the latter being, however, without any foundation.

I never saw him, as he was not permitted to come to the armies, and he was not a person that one was anxious to see.

But anyone who knew the Empress knew full well that she might have been spared many of the wicked accusations which were made concerning her dealings with him.

4th January 1917.

In the train last night on my return from Petrograd to Headquarters I travelled with one of the Emperor's A.D.C.'s. He was naturally full of the Rasputin episode, and

anxious as to its results. The question is: What will be done with the officers who took part in it? If they suffer in any way there will be trouble. The best thing, as I told my friends, would be to pack them off to their regiments at the front. It is such a peculiar case, reading like a romance of the Middle Ages, that it may lead to any and all sorts of trouble, and it requires a very strong man at Court to place the matter in a clear and impartial light before their Majesties.

The difficulty would be specially with the Empress, being as she is a firm believer in the good faith of Rasputin. And her influence reacts on the Emperor.

I confess that even with the disappearance of the most important 'factor in the drama' I see no light ahead yet, and the situation may develop into anything.

Luckily the Emperor's manifesto on the German proposals of peace strengthened his hands before this event occurred, but these are very critical times and grave tales are told of who will be the next victim.

Strong men at Court and a good Premier, given the choice of his own Cabinet, might do something, but the Russians themselves tell me these are difficult to find.

If the Emperor spoke to me on the matter, which he certainly will not, I know what I could say, but it is impossible for me to begin, and not my place to do so, though one feels so anxious, kind as they have both been to me throughout, lest some still more serious trouble be in store for them.

The crowned heads of this country are so far from their people, and the Empress through shyness and a nervous nature is but rarely seen, though she has worked splendidly for the sick and wounded, and has a really kind and sympathetic nature, which unfortunately no one experiences except those who are very near her, or who happen to have seen a good deal of her, as I have done.

Shyness gives at once the impression of aloofness, with the result that it 'puts off' anyone getting to know her or being able to tell her things she should know.

At present she stands alone. It is a sad business, and when one looks at those pretty daughters one wonders what will happen to them all.

The very cabmen in the street are rejoicing over the removal of Rasputin, and they and many others think that by his

removal German influence has received a check.

During most of January and February the Emperor was away from Headquarters, and I was up at Petrograd for the Allied conference, meeting my old chief, Lord Milner, with whom I had attended the Bloemfontein conference previous to the South African War in 1899.

11*th January* 1917.

As the Russian New Year falls in two days, I wrote to-day to my old friend, Count Fredericks, to ask him to convey my respectful good wishes to the Emperor and Empress.

I said that I hoped that the new year might bring us the peace which I knew they wished to see brought about by our victorious arms, and I added that I hoped their Imperial Majesties would always find good advisers to help them in times of difficulty. I added :

'Courtisans on peut trouver assez facilement—conseillers, c'est plus difficile—et ce sont les hommes qui peuvent parler franchement, et cœur ouvert, qui sont si rares parceque la vérité n'est pas toujours la chose qu'on aime plus entendre.

'Vous me connaisez si bien que je sais

que vous comprenez que je parle toujours franchement, et je comprends beaucoup de ce qui passe dans ces temps, sans que je puisse en parler.'

8th March 1917.

The Emperor came back to Headquarters to-day and kindly brought me some flowers from the Empress. I had seen him at the great banquet given to the Allied members of the conference at Tsarskoye Selo, when I had a short talk to him, but not otherwise.

At dinner, however, I sat next him and thought he was looking better. We talked a good deal on the conference, and he spoke of the retention of General Belaieff at the War Office.

11th March 1917.

It was intended that I should go on a visit to Rumania about now and I spoke to H.M. on the subject, as I had to see Alexeieff, who had returned, much improved in health, that evening regarding some matters in connection with the Russian staff in that country. As I was leaving, the Emperor on bidding me good-night added: 'You have quite made up your mind to go to Rumania?' I

answered, 'Yes, sir,' wondering at the reason of his inquiry.

12*th March* 1917.

I had said good-bye to the Emperor, but various reasons put off my departure, and on sending over to ask if I might as usual lunch at the Emperor's I found he had left the night before, taking with him the Battalion of St George, and Ivanoff having left with other troops. When saying good-bye to the Emperor the only hint I got was his voice as he said to me: 'Have you quite made up your mind to go?'

(Though there were indications from Alexeieff's anxious manner when he went in to see the Emperor that something serious was afoot, we at Headquarters had no idea of the impending trouble.)

I am afraid by news which drifts in that things are very bad at Petrograd—officers arrested, and Government said to be anyhow and anywhere.

Alexeieff is said to have done his best to persuade the Emperor to let the Duma remain open, and to give the 'Government a free hand, and deal gently with some troops' which mutinied and refused to arrest those

who took part in some reported strikes, but his persuasions were useless, as the Emperor, it is said, was determined to keep matters in his own hands.

This afternoon, though here the situation was calm, dispatches kept dropping in, and there was evidently serious trouble in the air.

How matters will develop it is hard to say —the Emperor's position is very difficult, if he declines to give way to the advice offered to him.

If only one felt that he had someone with him who was strong enough to influence him, one would feel more at ease.

Rodzianko is said to be named as 'President' of a new Government.

Six P.M.—Telegrams just in say that the Hotel Astoria at Petrograd has been burned, and poor old Count Fredericks' house as well. He is said (most untruly) to be pro-German, and yet it was only a few days ago that he told me he had arranged, as president of the Yacht Club, to blackball all Germans when peace comes.

14*th March* 1917.

Heard to-day rumours that the Emperor is hung up at a siding *en route* to Tsarskoye

Selo, and that no engine can be got to pull his train on—that Tsarskoye Selo is under guard of troops, and that Ivanoff's two divisions are held up on the railway line. Meanwhile all orders to the armies are going on as usual, and most of the factories are said to be working. From this distance it looks like a peaceful revolution, but all looks bad.

15*th March* 1917.

The situation was reported worse during the night, wires all held up for the General Staff, and I can get no news.

I had thought over the situation very seriously during the night, wondering how I could help in any way. Apart from my anxiety for the Emperor, from whom I had received such invariable and extraordinary kindness, I felt the premonition that a real and serious revolution would mean the débâcle of the Russians as a fighting force for the Allied cause.

I determined, therefore, to take upon myself the responsibility of writing a personal letter to him.

I drafted it and of course sent it to Alexeieff, asking him whether he approved of it and of its dispatch, in which case he would possibly

arrange for its being delivered. While it was with Alexeieff the Grand Duke Serge sent over to ask if I would go and see him. I went at once, and he talked over the position, laying stress upon the importance of allowing free discussion in the Duma. He was in great anxiety, and asked me if I could not communicate with the Emperor, who knew and trusted me.

I told him that Alexeieff was in possession of a letter of mine, which he would, if he thought well, send to his Majesty. The Grand Duke asked me if he could see a copy of it and I at once agreed. He cordially agreed with every word I had written, but said the substance ought to be telegraphed, as the letter would take so long in dispatch.

Alexeieff agreed that the letter might be of use, and an officer is to be dispatched at once with it to the Emperor, who is at Pskof with General Russki.

The situation was so critical and urgent that I had no time to consult our Ambassador or the home authorities, and informed them of my action by wire and letter.

It is the last straw to which I can cling to help out what I fear will be a great disaster otherwise.

At a critical time like this decision, and quick decision, is necessary.

Quiet must be restored.

Work must proceed.

The armies must be got into a settled state of mind if possible.

The anti-war party must be checked.

The letter I addressed to the Emperor was as follows:—

General Headquarters,
Russian Armies in the Field.
14th March 1917.

Sir,—Your Imperial Majesty knows full well that I would not venture to approach your Majesty at this time, nor indeed at any other, in the form of a letter were it not that my devotion both to the Emperor and Empress of Russia makes me do so.

I am neither diplomatist nor politician, but a pretty old soldier who has seen much of both sides of the British Empire as well as war.

Russia, I know well, is a country which does not admit of treatment in the same way as other countries, but in all countries there are times when it is necessary to have a 'velvet glove over the iron hand.'

I hear a good deal and I say little, but I consider quietly, and in my judgment, for what it is worth on matters now, when above all considerations I know it is nearest your Majesty's heart to end this war by victory, there is danger that the army, which is devoted to the cause of beating the enemy, may say, We cannot continue to fight against the Germans if we have to fight against our own people, and if we are withdrawn from the front for that purpose.

It overlooks the fact that your Majesty and those around you are as keen to win the war as any soldier in the ranks. It is ignorant of the fact that old and trusted servants around you, like Count Fredericks, are true Russians at heart.

Your Majesty's position is that of an autocrat, but an autocrat can govern only in these days with the advice of good counsellors, and the people want to feel that these counsellors are chosen from amongst the people themselves.

In all the troubles I have seen in different countries it has always been found the best plan to have an outlet. It is like an inflammatory growth in the body which wants piercing so that the poison may escape.

Free talk in the Parliament or Duma seems to me the outlet, so that the people can feel that those they send to the councils of the Emperor can express their feelings.

No doubt German mischief is at the bottom of this trouble now, but it would conquer that German mischief if it was said to the people that your Majesty trusted them to advise you as to the necessary action to be taken at the present time and that you accepted the Government appointed by them. It seems to me that the moment has now come when appeal to the peoples of Russia to assist you in the heavy task which lies on your shoulders is necessary.

I know full well that in thus approaching your Majesty I am liable to be told that it is not my business, and that I should return to my own country, but I have absolute belief and trust that you are devoted to the cause of the Allies, and it is only with that cause at heart, and my determined and sincere devotion to both your Majesties, that I venture to take what may be a most improper action and even at my own risk of dismissal.

But whatever happens no one can say that there is a man in Russia, of the Allies or the

Russians, more devoted to the welfare of their country.

I have served here to the best of my ability since the beginning of the war, with the same devotion to your Majesty as to my own King, and it is only with that equal devotion to both that I venture to write this letter.

I trust your Majesty may forgive me for what may appear to you a most improper way of writing.

(*Sd.*) J. H.-W.

[*N.B.*—The officer who was dispatched with the letter was stopped and disarmed, but got away with my letter, which was sent back to me with the seal unbroken, and is lying in my desk now as it was returned to me.]

Petrograd telegraphs me to-day that reports there say that Rodzianko, who is head of the present temporary Government, is going to meet the Emperor and invite him to abdicate, nominating the Tsarevitch as his successor, with the Emperor's brother, the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch (who commanded the Division Sauvage and other cavalry during the war), as Regent, and Prince Lvof as head of the Council of

Ministers. But there are so many rumours about that it is difficult to get hold of anything definite.

The most sensible plan, so far as Russia's continuance in the war is concerned, would be to leave the Emperor as he is, with condition that he accepts the new Government as it is.

But I fear the intention is to depose the Emperor, a great error of tactics.

Reported to-night that Emperor has abdicated.

16*th March* 1917.

Abdication confirmed. Grand Duke Michael to be Regent, and Grand Duke Nicholas to take command of the armies.

The latter news is good, but the crown is another story, and there will probably be further developments about that.

If the Grand Duke Nicholas is retained as C.-in-C. there is a good prospect for the military position, but the other situation is a very doubtful factor.

The Emperor returned here to-night, and some discussion arose as to whether we should go to the station to meet him, but it was wiser under the circumstances that we should

not. It is difficult and sad enough for him as it is, without a crowd looking on.

Meanwhile the mischievous head of Anarchy is beginning to protrude its ugly face on the scene, and there are signs that the actors in this drama, which looks like turning into a tragedy, have taken on a bigger piece than they can stage properly.

If the Grand Duke Nicholas can arrive from the Caucasus in time to steady the navy and army it will be well, but sufficient mischief has already been done to upset much of the work in factories and other essentials for carrying on the war, and all our efforts and hopes look black just now.

The Grand Duke Serge spoke to me on the question of the Grand Duke Michael (the Emperor's brother) taking temporary office as Regent. That, I said, was only a palliative, and temporary at that. It required a very strong man. The immediate point, I added, was to continue the war to victory, and for that purpose it would have been better to retain the Emperor, with a Government, such as I have mentioned above.

If this new Government had been accepted by the Emperor as his, it would be a concession to the people, and would put an end

to the hopes of the enemy to destroy the power of Russia.

So many Russians had told me that a revolution would come after the war, but none till then.

I pray for a patch of blue sky, but I cannot see it, though some people talk as if it were a 'new Russia.'

The new Russia, if so, will not be in a state to help us Allies much.

17*th March* 1917.

At a meeting of my Allied colleagues in my room we decided to wire to the Grand Duke Nicholas to assure him of our support as Allies. We said that we awaited him as C.-in-C.

Bazili, the diplomatic officer attached to Headquarters, called on me, and General Janin joined us. B. told us that the Black Sea Fleet was all right up to date, but there had been grave signs of mutiny in the Baltic Fleet, which is largely composed of men of the industrial, not agricultural, classes. This morning's reports, however, were better.

Anxiety is expressed as to some place of refuge for the Emperor—a difficult point. Poor old Count Fredericks sent word to ask

if I could go over and see him. I found him, naturally, much broken and distressed, but a gallant old man as usual; his house at Petrograd burned, all his beautiful treasures looted, and his wife, who is very old and ill, removed to the regimental hospital of the Corps de Garde—his old regiment.

The Emperor is allowed to communicate with Tsarskoye Selo, where all the Imperial family are confined under guard, all the children but one laid up with scarlatina, to add to the poor Empress's troubles, bad enough as they are already.

It is said that Voyekoff, of the Emperor's staff, son-in-law of Count Fredericks, was arrested to-night.

Count Graubi, commander of the Emperor's Cossacks of the Guard, came to my room last night, and Janin and de Ryckel and I had a long talk to him. In the anxiety felt for the Emperor's life we chiefs of Allied missions offered to accompany him in the train that is to take him to Tsarskoye Selo.

18*th March* 1917.

There were daily meetings of the chiefs of military missions in my room, to discuss

the situation, and endeavour to evolve some means of encouragement to the armies to remain in the field and continue the war.

To-day we sent the following telegram to the army chiefs:—

'Au moment ou un nouveau Chef va prendre le Commandement de l'Armée et de la Flotte, les Généraux représentants des Armées Alliées au Grand Quartier Général de toutes les Armées Russes ont cru de leur devoir de lui dire qu'ils conservaient une confiance absolue dans la victoire finale et prochaine de nos armes, toutes dirigées contre l'ennemi commun.

'Dans les circonstances actuelles, les représentants des Armées Alliées croient aussi de leur devoir de dire a leurs frères d'armes de Russie que cette confiance absolue qu'ils ont dans la victoire prochaine est fondée sur les succès incessants remportés actuellement sur tous les fronts de l'ordre de bataille. Elle est fondée aussi sur la grandeur des préparatifs en vue de l'offensive générale du printemps ainsi que sur les résultats certains que garantit le concert établi pour assurer l'union sacrée des efforts. Seule cette union

peut assurer définitivement le triomphe des principes de la liberté des nations et des peuples.'

Answers were received as follows (spelling and wording as received):—

General Hanbury Williams.

J'adresse de la personne de votre excellence ma plus profonde reconnaissance a tous les représentants des Armées Alliées au Grand Quartier Général de toutes les armées Russes pour l'expression de leurs sentiments et partage entièrement leur certitude de la victoire prochaine des Armées Alliées sur l'ennemi commun.

(*Sd.*) Rouzsky,
Pskof. 7/20 *Mars.*

General Sir J. Hanbury Williams.

Les buts élevés pour les quels coulé le sang fraternel des Armées Alliées ne peuvent pas ne pas nous garantir la victoire finale sur l'ennemi cruelle et opiniâtre et je prie votre excellence d'agréer et d'adresser aux généraux représentants des Armées Alliées ma conviction ferme que les Armées opérant sous

mon commandement rempliront leur devoir sacré et appliqueront tous leurs efforts pour vaincre l'ennemi qui commence déjà a s'affaiblir sous la pression de nos vaillants Alliées et pour garantir le triomphe de la vérité et de la justice.

(*Sd.*) General Sakharoff,
Jassy.

General Hanbury Williams.

La dépêche signée par votre excellence et par les autres représentants des Armées Alliées je l'ai faite parvenir a la connaissance de tous les troupes et établissements du front ouest. J'exprime ma plus profonde conviction que notre patrie supportera tous les ébranlements intérieurs et transitoires et en sortira grandement recomfortée ce qui permettra aux armes Russes dans l'union étroite avec nos Alliées d'assurer un succès finale et décisif dans notre lutte contre un ennemi commun.

C'est alors que sera atteint un développement pacifique de nos peuples libres et seront brisées les aspirations Germanique vers la dominion basée sur force et violence.

(*Sd.*) Everth.

Received answer from the Grand Duke Nicholas:

General Hanbury Williams,
General Headquarters Russian Army.

Send you and chiefs of military missions of the Allies my very sincere gratitude for the telegram, and I feel sure that you will all help me in organising and maintaining that combined ascendance of efforts of the Allies so indispensable for our general success and final victory.

(*Sd.*) Grand Duke Nicolas.

An answer also from Alexeieff, at whose disposal I had placed myself in case I could help in any way.

He writes as follows:—

Mon cher Général,—Je vous suis profondément reconnaissant des sentiments qui vous ont dicté votre lettre dans les heures pénibles, qui traversent actuellement mon pays.

Soyez assuré que si l'occasion se présente de faire appel a la bonne volonté dont vous m'avez si aimablement transmis le témoignage je serais heureux de la saisir.

Croyez, mon cher Général, a mes sentiments affectueux.

(*Sd.*) Alexeieff.

I have also wired to the commanders of armies on behalf of my colleagues and self.

The Emperor and the Empress-Mother attended church this morning.

Communications with Petrograd all anyhow.

19*th March* 1917.

After dinner last night I received a telephone message from Count Fredericks asking if I would go over and see him. I went straight off, walking through the sombre night to the Emperor's quarters. There I found him with all his things packed.

He told me that he had received information that he was 'condamné à mort,' and in view of the scandal that would arise from his arrest while with the Emperor he was leaving that night, if he could get away, for the Crimea. He said that he had nothing to live for now, that he did not care so far as he was concerned, but that he was determined not to make the position more difficult than it was already for the Emperor.

Then the poor old man broke down completely, kissed me several times in the Russian fashion, and begged me to convey the news to my colleagues.

His last words were: 'You have always been such a good friend to me.'

[*N.B.*—A fine, gallant old gentleman accused most unjustly of being of German birth and pro-German.]

This morning early I received a telephone message to say that the Empress-Mother wished to see me, so I went off and remained with her Majesty alone for about half-an-hour, a most sad and painful interview, in which she showed great courage.

We talked and discussed various matters, and on leaving I met the Grand Duke Alexander, who spoke of the very serious and dangerous condition of the country, and of the enemy influences acting on the working classes for a stoppage of the war on the part of Russia.

The present Government have declared their intention to continue the war, but intrigue and other mischief are corrupting the working classes, and obviously playing for a separate peace on the part of Russia.

The sooner the Grand Duke Nicholas arrives

the better, but there may be difficulties on his journey owing to the danger that some of the revolutionaries may delay the train and put obstacles in way of his journey.

If we are to keep our Allies in the field it is obvious that a declaration of support of the present Government must be made, though how long it will last, God knows. But it is necessary to back this Provisional Government lest worse befall.

The Grand Duke Alexander discussed various proposals to aid in restoring a determination to stand by the Allies and continue the war.

I got out pretty late that afternoon, as the anxiety about the Emperor's journey to Tsarskoye Selo had made it necessary for us 'Allies' to consider whether we could be of any assistance in the matter.

Alexeieff and everyone else who had served under him here were equally anxious.

We decided to offer to accompany him in his train, with the hope that the presence of Allied generals would ensure his safety.

After a short walk, on reaching my quarters I found a message to say that the Emperor wanted to see me, or rather that I was wanted at 'the palace' at 6 P.M.

I walked down through the gathering darkness and through the gloomy, dirty streets, rendered more sombre by my thoughts as I went along, and there passed through my mind the many happier days when I went to visit the Tsar of all the Russias, who had always received me with that bright and happy smile, which he invariably greeted me with, even when things were not at their best.

There were no premonitions about this visit, for I knew full well what was awaiting me now—and that there could be no good news.

Except for a small crowd of loafers outside the entrance gates, there was no one about, and I reached the door of the house, a ray of light from the adjoining General Staff Offices just showing up the muddy path.

At the entrance I was stopped by a sentry with the red band of revolution round his arm. He at first would not hear of my admission, but I explained who I was, and at the same moment the faithful old body-servant of the Emperor appeared and told the sentry to let me pass unhindered.

Each step I took seemed to bring back some memory to me, the stairs along which

the little Tsarevitch used to run to bid us good-bye, the ante-room, which used to be full of officers and ministers on official visits, and where we used to gather daily before lunch and dinner, or with a mission, such as that which brought the Field-Marshal's bâton.

The ante-room was empty now and one bracket light only above the piano where I had stood talking to the Empress on the last occasion upon which I saw her. Such scenes seem to rush pell-mell through one's brain on such occasions.

I had no time for a set or stilted speech, and all I could say when I saw that familiar face again was: 'I am so sorry.'

I think, indeed I know, he understood.

I walked into the room, being left alone with him.

Apparently everything had been packed up, as the room, which used to be bright with flowers and the photographs and so on on his big table, looked now quite bare.

But he was sitting at the table in his khaki uniform, just as he used to sit when I went in to see him.

He looked tired and white, with big black lines under his eyes, but smiled as he shook

hands with me, and then asked me to come and sit on the sofa where we could talk.

I asked him if he had been able to sleep, and how the children who were ill at Tsarskoye Selo were getting on.

He told me that he had been able to get a certain amount of sleep, and that the news of the invalids was better. An officer had brought him a letter from the Empress hidden in his tunic. This he said had been a great comfort to him in his anxiety for her and the children.

We then talked over plans for his future, as he evidently saw that plans were no longer in his own hands.

He said that he had meant to carry out what I had written in my letter to him, but that matters had advanced so quickly, and it was too late. The proposal that the Tsarevitch should take his place with a Regent he could not accept, as he could not bear the separation from his only son, and he knew that the Empress would feel the same.

He was much touched with the offer we had made to accompany him to Tsarskoye Selo, and hoped that he would not have to leave Russia. He did not see that there

could be any objection to his going to the Crimea, which he hoped would be allowed, and if not, he would sooner go to England than anywhere.

He never referred to any anxiety in regard to his own safety, which was typical of him.

The question of his eventual place of asylum is for many and various reasons a difficult one.

He expressed a wish to write to me personally and not through some other channel, and then added that the right thing to do was to support the present Government, as that was the best way to keep Russia in the alliance to conclude the war. On this he laid great stress. He feared the revolution would ruin the armies.

As I prepared to leave he asked me for my photograph, which I sent him to-night, and said he would send me one of his.

As I said ‘ good-bye ’ in anticipation of the more formal farewell to-morrow, he turned to me and added : ‘ Remember, nothing matters but beating Germany.’

I went away sad and depressed, fearing that he has still hopes, though I have none.

It was a black night in more senses than one as I walked home.

20th March 1917.

I went to bed last night thinking a good deal of the crash which has fallen upon a man who has failed.

After dinner the Grand Duke Serge came up and sat in my room for a long time. We hope to get messages of encouragement from England to the armies here. Anarchism is showing itself already, and it will be lucky if the Imperial family can be got away somewhere in safety.

As I left the palace last night I saw hanging out of the windows of the local Duma, almost opposite the Emperor's windows, two huge red flags, and people in the streets, who about a week ago were shouting hurrahs for the Emperor, parading with red colours on their coats.

If there were some strong men about things might change again, but autocracy is dead.

A message from Alexeieff to say we had better not accompany the Emperor as he has already had great trouble in arranging for the Emperor to go to Tsarskoye Selo, and now that the Government have guaranteed his safe conduct it would be a reflection on that body. We bow, of course, to his decision, as we must not hamper the Government,

and the Emperor even in the midst of his trouble would think it right to support the chosen Government, two members of which are to accompany him.

12 Noon.—I have just seen the Emperor to bid him farewell. He said he hoped to see me at Tsarskoye Selo, and can hardly realise, I suppose, the unlikelihood of such a meeting.

He told me he had slept a little, but looked terribly worn and sad. He told me he was issuing a farewell message to the armies which he hoped would be published.

I was followed by my other colleagues of the military missions, all distressed and sad. He bid them each good-bye, and we all doubt if we shall ever see him again.

News from Petrograd is bad. Place more settled and calm itself, but army said to be 'anyhow.' British officers moving about among the men trying to get them right, but it looks now as if they wouldn't even have the Grand Duke Nicholas in command, in fact any Romanoffs.

That is all madness, but they are mad and have started a fire which will be mighty hard to put out.

2 p.m.—Reports from Baltic Fleet said to

be better, and men expressed regret at the murder of the admiral, which they say was done under great provocation.

Count Fredericks said to have been arrested at Gomel. One has been through pretty bad times one way and another over here, but this will take a lot of beating. Alexeieff is very anxious as to the situation.

A message from General Staff regarding the guarding of the Emperor:

'Le Gouvernement temporaire resout les trois questions affirmativement: il prendra toutes les mesures pour garantir le voyage sans obstacle jusqu'a Zarskoie Sielo, le se jour a Zarskoie Sielo et le voyage jusqu' a Roumanoi au Mourman.

'*Le President du Conseil des Ministres,*
'(*Sd.*) PRINCE C. LVOF.'

21*st March* 1917.

The Emperor before leaving bid good-bye to the staff to-day—a very touching ceremony, I am told, several of the officers bursting into tears.

General Staff have just informed me that telegrams are coming in from all over the country in support of the Grand Duke

Nicholas as Commander-in-Chief. The more this feeling can spread the better for the Allied cause, as it might rally the armies back to their work and a more settled frame of mind.

Meanwhile people are walking about the streets here with red ribbons on. Police have all been dismissed, this being a 'free country' now (God save the mark!). I saw one of the results to-day when I was walking with the Italian general past a church. We noticed that the chimney and wall over the stove of this wooden building was ablaze with fire, and the church spire also had caught fire. The people sitting calmly in the presbytery attached didn't seem to know, so we told them and looked round for someone to give the fire alarm, but police being abolished had to get a stray soldier to go off for the fire brigade, which eventually, not having also been abolished, appeared on the scene and salvaged some of the remains.

One of the Emperor's A.D.C.'s came in early to see me to ask my advice as to whether he should go to Tsarskoye Selo, or remain here in his new appointment in the artillery section.

I advised him to remain here, as I felt sure H.M. would prefer him to do so.

22nd March 1917.

When I woke up, Missi, my orderly and servant, put a crowd of telegrams on my bed.

At 10.30 I went down to see the Empress-Mother at her request, as she is leaving for Kieff. All this is so terribly sad and trying for her, but I never saw a braver person.

23rd March 1917.

Last night Alexeieff sent for me and we had a long talk. He is gravely anxious as to what may happen to the Emperor and Empress, who are now, he tells me, under close arrest at Tsarskoye Selo.

He is most anxious that both should be got out of the country to some haven of refuge.

Janin, de Ryckel and I have done what we can to help, having talked it all over, though our efforts to accompany the Emperor to Tsarskoye Selo were snubbed.

Major-General John Headlam, who had been on an 'artillery adviser' trip, turned up, and gave me a most interesting account of what he had seen of the feeling among troops he saw.

Many of the officers had the unfortunate

and totally false impression that the Court from top to bottom was pro-German. At same time no anti-dynastic sentiment was expressed. The Grand Duke Michael's appointment was welcomed, and a prospect of the Tsarevitch eventually succeeding was welcomed. The appointment of the Grand Duke Nicholas as C.-in-C. was very popular. The impression was that German intrigues would be effectually checked, and that the change might lead to representative government.

Over and over again he heard the expression: 'Now we shall have responsible ministers.'

Kieff, through which he had passed, was a mixture of quiet and hysteria.

A Russian officer whom he knew and had just arrived from Petrograd gave him his impressions as follows:—

'The real danger of the situation lies in the extreme wing of the Labour party, who are nothing but anarchists and terrorists. They are only a small percentage, perhaps 15 per cent., but they exert great influence. These men care nothing for consequences so long as they can spread their own doctrines. They are ready to end the war for this.

'The cry is already to kill Rodzianko, who, the anarchists say, is now only thinking of making himself first President of the Republic, and Kerenski, their own socialist representative in the Government, because he is too moderate, and now that he has become a minister does not want to do more.

'The Government dare not tackle this anarchist element because they have succeeded in obtaining the support of the soldiers, and the Union is now called the Union of Workers and Soldiers.

'The soldiers in question are those in the depots at Petrograd, not 2 per cent. of whom are old soldiers and have seen service—mostly youths of 18 to 19. During the first two or three days they looted the food and drink shops, going to sleep on the spot when they got drunk. Now when spoken to they don't know what they are out for. They are already saying they have done their work in dethroning the Emperor, and demand to be given pensions and let go.

'It is very important to avoid letting the anarchist wing get hold of the real army. The delegates who have been sent from the Government will do no harm—they have gone officially and work through the commanders.

The danger lies in secret emissaries from the extremists inciting to mutiny.

'Not much material damage was done in Petrograd, and the offices of the Ministry of War were not interfered with, only a few windows broken, etc., but six generals were killed in the street, and some police inspectors said to have been burned. The sailors of the fleet are the most dangerous element. They burned an admiral alive, his wife dying of shock and daughter shooting herself.

'The greater part of the munition works are beginning to work again, but badly. They think they can do without officers—there is too much talk and visits from agitators.

'The Minister for War no doubt knows the importance of the munition question, but it is doubtful whether it will really be possible to increase the present output.

'The conditions in Russia cannot be compared with those in England in industrial matters. The setting up of national shell factories as in England is quite out of the question.'

24*th March* 1917.

Very busy yesterday on the wires in morning. Then a message announcing arrival

of the Grand Duke Nicholas. At 5 P.M. I went down to the station to see him in his car, and had a most affectionate greeting from him and the Grand Duke Peter. My old friend Galitzin was with him, and we adjourned to the Grand Duke's room to have a talk. Later on General Janin and the rest of the colleagues joined him at dinner, J. and I sitting at his table.

He has had a regular triumphal 'march' here, cheering troops and others meeting him at all the stations, which looks as if he might have had the same welcome if he had gone to Petrograd, and who knows whether it would have put a different complexion on affairs?

But the whole position is still very critical and uncertain.

At 10 A.M. this morning Janin and I got a message asking us to go down again to see the G.D.

We remained waiting in Prince Galitzin's car till 12, but nothing happened, and we then joined the G.D. at lunch. Were obliged to leave then as our hands are pretty full of our own job. And we get continual messages to warn us to be most correct in 'our attitude.'

'Nous ne sommes pas des idiots, quoique nous sommes soldats,' said a friend of mine.

As a matter of fact, not only did the Emperor say that it was one's duty to support the Government, but it is obvious.

There appears to have been a message sent to the Grand Duke inviting him to resign his command. He wished us to be aware of this, but was expecting the arrival of the messenger bearing it this morning, and hoped we should be with him to be witnesses of his attitude.

This message should have caught him *en route* here but failed.

The following is a translation of the correspondence:—

Temporary Government,
Minister President.
9/22 *March* 1917.
No. 9 Petrograd.

The Temporary Government, considering the question of your appointment to the post of Commander-in-Chief, which took place just previous to the abdication of the late Emperor, has come to the conclusion that the situation which has arisen and exists at

the present time renders necessary your resignation of this appointment.

The national feeling is decidedly and insistently against the employment of any members of the house of Romanoff in any official position.

The Temporary Government does not consider it right to be indifferent to the voice of the people, an indifference which might lead to the most serious complications, and it feels convinced that you, for the good of the country, will meet the situation half-way and resign, before your arrival at the Stafka, the title of Commander-in-Chief.

(*Sd.*) *Minister President*,
PRINCE LVOF.

To the above the Grand Duke, absolutely loyal to the Temporary Government, and to any consideration which he was told was for the good of his beloved country, and again absolutely correct in his attitude, straight and dignified, even at a cost which few can quite grasp without that intimate knowledge of his fine character with which we who served with him were so well acquainted, answered as follows:—

STAFKA,
11/24th March 1917.

To the MINISTER PRESIDENT.

In your letter of 9/22nd March, in the name of the Temporary Government, appointed by the Imperial Duma, is stated the inadmissibility of any members of the house of Romanoff to occupy any official posts.

The Government also expresses assurance that for the good of the country I should meet the requirements of the situation halfway and resign, before my arrival at Headquarters, the title of Commander-in-Chief.

I am happy once more to be able to prove my love for my country, which so far Russia has not doubted.

In accordance with Para. 47 of Regulations for Troops in the Field, which says, 'In the event of the departure of the Commander-in-Chief, a temporary fulfilment of his duties shall devolve upon the Chief of Staff,' I hand over this day to General Alexeieff these duties until the appointment by the Temporary Government of the new Commander-in-Chief.

At the same time I hereby beg the Minister for War to retire me from the army.

As regards the wishes expressed by the Government that I should relinquish the chief command before my arrival at Headquarters, this I could not do, since I arrived here on 10/23 of March at four in the afternoon, while your letter was received on 11/24 March.

Since I am in the zone of the active armies and in agreement with Army Regulations referred to above, I shall carry out such orders as may be given me by the Temporary Commander-in-Chief, General Alexeieff.

I am taking the oath to-day.

(*Sd.*) GRAND DUKE NICOLAI NICOLAIEVICH.

11/24 *March* 1917.

To the MINISTER FOR WAR.

In accordance with desire expressed by the Temporary Government in a letter from the Minister President dated 9/22 March, I have relinquished the duties of Commander-in-Chief, 11/24th March, to Chief of Staff, General Alexeieff, who, according to Article 47 of Army Regulations for Troops in the Field, is obliged to assume temporary position of Commander-in-Chief until the appointment of a new Commander-in-Chief by the Temporary Government.

At the same time I beg you to retire me from the army with right to wear uniform, a right which I have according to law as a Cavalier of the Orders of St George.

(*Sd.*) Grand Duke Nicolai Nicolaievich.

25*th March* 1917.

At 6 p.m. Prince Galitzin came to see me and said that the Grand Duke had received a letter, which should have caught him *en route* here, from the Government asking him to resign as it was 'the wish of the people' that none of the Romanoff family should remain in office. The G.D. has answered that he was under the impression that it was the wish of the people that he should be Commander-in-Chief, and he had received a message from the Emperor asking him to take command.

As, however, that appeared not to be so, he placed his resignation in the hands of the Government, and awaited information as to what he should do, and when and where he should go.

Janin, who was with me, and I expressed our regrets, and informed our colleagues.

After dinner two generals called on me and agreed that under the circumstances it

was the best, and indeed the only, course for the Grand Duke to take under the circumstances.

One, the head of the cavalry school, told me he thought all would go well now, and that he had a telegram from Gourko saying he was due here to-day or to-morrow, and he thought he would be C.G.S. and Russki Commander-in-Chief.

He begged me to think the position would soon right itself—all was quiet at Petrograd, and so on.

'What about food,' I answered. 'It has been distributed lavishly lately, but will that last?'

Of this he seemed doubtful, and there trouble will come in.

The other general told me that unfortunately the men now being called up for service at Petrograd were of the class that was in the 1905-1906 revolution, were independent of the officers and all 'red.'

I told the Grand Duke of the message I had received from Petrograd that the safety of the Emperor had been assured by the Government.

2.30 P.M.—Colonel Bazaroff of the General Staff came to my room and asked me if I

had heard anything of an incident which had occurred last night in regard to the Grand Duke Nicholas and some workmen on the railway.

I said 'Yes.'

I had heard from a general officer that a lot of workmen had collected near his train, asking for an interview with him, and that a staff officer had been sent to see them. The leader of the deputation wanted to know why the G.D. had resigned, said that the army loved him as well as the working classes.

They were then told that it was true, and that his reasons for sending in his resignation were that he had been invited by the Provisional Government to do so. They could not believe it, so the Grand Duke saw them and explained the situation.

I was told these working men said he was still the man they wanted, and they would stop the train from leaving. A meeting was got up at the theatre last night, and the position is awkward.

It is rumoured that they will still stop the train if possible, but one may rest assured that the G.D. will do nothing incorrect, or which may hamper the task of the Government.

The men in question have wired to Orsha, an important railway junction to the north of this, asking them to join. So it looks like a 'pocket' revolution in favour of the Grand Duke.

To-night it is reported that the aeroplane hangars at Kieff are on fire.

26*th March* 1917.

A message to say that the Grand Duke Nicholas will receive the chiefs of Allied military missions this afternoon.

Polivanoff, who is Assistant Minister for War, has arrived. I met him at the staff mess at lunch. He came straight up to me and shook hands most cordially, addressing me as 'my oldest friend among the Allies,' as I knew him when he was Minister for War. He was in great spirits, said: 'All is going well, and I like a busy time like this, it suits me. Difficulties and excitement are splendid.'

I hope he will not have more than he bargains for; it looks to me as if they had 'bitten off more than they can chew.' I am to see him to-morrow at 10.15.

At 3 P.M. we went to see the Grand Duke

Nicholas in his railway car. We were all shown in together, and he was perfectly calm and collected, talking only about the war situation. He then bid us all a formal farewell, and the others left, I staying behind to talk to my old friend Galitzin.

I had been longer with the Grand Duke than any of the others, having joined up in August 1914.

I was naturally a good deal upset at this end of our service together, and poor Galitzin felt it all terribly. While we were talking, the Grand Duke sent for me, and giving me his photograph, bid me a final good-bye. It was all very touching, and memories of the long months we spent together at the beginning of the war kept cropping up.

What impressed one so much was his dignified and calm demeanour, not a word of reproach for anyone, only his steadfast love for his country, and determination not to hamper the already sufficiently difficult task of the Government.

(How long will that Government last, and what will succeed it ?)

I walked home sad and wondering if ever I should see any of my old comrades again.

27th March 1917.

A long interview with Polivanoff this morning, he being very optimistic as to the future. He thought Alexeieff was an over-strong disciplinarian. (Lord knows how long discipline of any kind will last with these men, who are really like children.) He laid stress on the necessity for supporting the Provisional Government. I assured him that we should do all in our power in that direction, and added quite frankly that it was not only for the sake of Russia, but for the continuation of the war in conjunction with us Allies.

28th March 1917.

Bazaroff of General Staff came to see me and asked me if I had a satisfactory talk with Polivanoff.

I said: 'Yes, so far as it went,' but that he was anxious about Alexeieff's orders to the troops.

I did not see how discipline, very especially at this moment, could be 'loosened up,' and that the only way would be to alter the wording a little, but retain the principle.

I am gradually becoming a sort of intermediary between Russians and Russians, and I wish I could help them more. Anyhow

they get a perfectly frank expression of opinion, be it acceptable or not. This is no time for anything but frankness.

The Grand Duke is, I hear, waiting for two deputies from the Government to accompany him to his destination. He is fully determined that they should deal with any demonstrations which may occur in his favour *en route*, and quite rightly.

Poor General Coanda, the Rumanian, came to me about the difficulties regarding railways, supplies, etc., for Rumania. The staff here, in the present state of débâcle, can do little, and I well understand his anxiety, but his only course was, so I told him, to go to Petrograd and see whether some order out of chaos might be arranged at the War Office there, but I fear the advice is only a broken reed.

29*th March* 1917.

General A., an old friend of the Grand Duke's, brought me copies of the correspondence which had passed between the Grand Duke Nicholas and the Government regarding his retirement from the command.

He told me that they had all gone to Livadia in the Crimea, where H.I.H. has a

property of his own, and that Galitzin and his staff will remain with him for the present. He remarked upon how calm and dignified had been the attitude of the G.D. throughout, which I agreed was no surprise to his friends.

A. told me that a soldier friend of his travelling in plain clothes heard two Jews discussing the situation and saying that the present kind of republic was not the sort they wanted at all.

Some of the Cossacks at Petrograd were so sick with the state of affairs that they had marched straight off to the front on their own.

Petrograd reports the killing of eighty Russian naval officers by mutineers. And this is what telegraphic reports from home describe as a 'peaceful revolution'!

31*st March* 1917.

Reports say that General Ivanoff has been arrested. Only a few months ago he was one of the heroes of the war.

What makes me sick is that some people who, a very short time ago, were squealing to be presented to the Emperor, are now abusing him.

It is right to do all possible to help the

existing authorities to tide over these difficult times, and no doubt there was much in the previous régime open to criticism, but when one hears of the Emperor being 'in with the Germans,' etc., it is a d——d lie, and to one or two of the squealers I have said so.

Goutchakoff, the new Minister for War, arrived yesterday, lunched at the staff mess, and came up and spoke to us afterwards, saying he would see us chiefs of Allied missions to-day.

1*st April* 1917.

Yesterday morning the chiefs of Allied military missions called on the new Minister for War in his car at the station here. The following is a full account of the interview which, as it is historical, I give in full. As we took no notes, we all met afterwards and drew up a précis which we all agreed to as correct.

Mr Goutchakoff, Minister for War in the present Government of Russia, received us at 12 noon on the 31st March.

He first thanked us for the great services we had rendered to Russia since the beginning of the war, and also during the sad circumstances through which we are now passing.

He had the conviction that we should continue to lend ' our precious aid ' to the Provisional Government.

He had assembled us, he said, to lay before us the situation in such a manner as to consolidate our agreement regarding their eventual action, and also to show us plainly what the Russian Government can do and cannot do, with the view that our operations should be clearly undertaken with a definite understanding of the possible efforts of the Russian armies.

He then gave us an exposé of the revolution.

When the Duma received the announcement of its dissolution, tumultuous assemblies took place in the streets of Petrograd. The regiments called up to maintain order did their duty, but with an entire absence of enthusiasm. It was obvious that discipline would relax next day.

The revolution declared itself suddenly. There was no plotting for it. Indeed, no plot existed. There were no leaders.

The entire mass—army, citizens, populace—rose as if magnetised by the oppression of the *ancien régime*—of autocracy, an excess of despotism, obsessed by nepotism—carried away by the ' scandals of the Court.'

In the evening Goutchakoff tried to get into touch with the military commandant of Petrograd. He failed to do so. He was nowhere to be found, but during the night it was learned that he had taken refuge with his family in the outskirts of Petrograd.

The situation was a very grave one.

Petrograd contained about 150,000 to 160,000 men of reserve troops undergoing instruction. These troops were re-divided into regiments mustering about 10,000 to 15,000 with fifty or sixty officers, mostly officers of auxiliary forces, or more or less incapable officers sent back from the front to the headquarters of their unit with a view of being given further instruction.

On the same evening the Duma drew up a telegram to the Emperor with a view of obtaining from him certain concessions—notably the constitution of a liberal ministry.

The next day at a very early hour certain of the Petrograd regiments came and offered their services to the Duma. In the morning delegations of the regiments at Tsarskoye Selo, of the Emperor's Court, and of the private police of their Majesties came and placed themselves under the orders of the Duma, saying they would continue to carry out

orders on condition that lives should be spared.

Finally, the Ministers then in power, in order to save their lives, fled or placed themselves under the protection of the Duma.

Thus as has already been pointed out, the revolution had no chief. Certain officers agreed with their men, others were massacred by them, and the revolution appeared to have entered into the hands of the rebel soldiers.

In the meanwhile the workmen, the social democrats and the Radical socialists, who were quickly joined by the 'intellectuals,' students, medical men, lawyers and so on, formed themselves into a union and elected a committee which established itself at the Finland railway station.

From this moment a meeting was organised at the Maronydon, or 'People's Palace,' which sat day and night without interruption and lasted for several days.

In the streets, fire and massacre were the order of the day. It was under these conditions, while anarchy reigned supreme, that certain members of the Duma united themselves under the presidency of Rodzianko to try and turn this overwhelming tide into canals. These members formed themselves

into a committee which considered as coolly as possible the whole situation and decided to make every effort to dominate the rumbling mass of rioters. It was of first importance to calm down public opinion.

Thus it was necessary to select chiefs to whom some communication should be made.

In the meanwhile the former Government had nominated a new commander of the troops at Petrograd — a General Officer, formerly Military Attaché at Vienna.

Goutchakoff searched for him all day in vain. He found him in the evening, absolutely alone, and asked him if he could rely on any single regiment, or any single company, or even on one man. The answer was—No.

The partisans of the Emperor had no longer any existence. No partisans of the old régime existed any more.

The members of the Committee were all Monarchists except one — M. Kerenski, a Republican socialist.

It was decided that a deputation should be sent to the Emperor to lay the situation before him and obtain his abdication in favour of his son, with the Grand Duke Michael (the Emperor's brother) as Regent. It was

thought that the sympathetic soul of the Russian people would be moved by the youth and delicate health of the young heir.

The committee also counted upon the mild and indulgent nature of the Regent as a means of establishing the new basis of a new régime before the accession to the throne of the young Alexis.

Goutchakoff and another member of the Duma left for Pskof. On arrival at Louga they saw the troops of the second line established in trenches and with batteries of guns and machine-guns ready to meet the troops from the front whom they expected to be marching on Petrograd.

On approaching Pskof they found the same measures taken by the first-line troops in preparation to meet the advance of the troops which they expected as marching on against them to cover Petrograd.

It was nevertheless certain that the front-line troops gave their support to the revolutionary movement.

During the three days the new movement had spread, and those regiments which seemed the most loyal to the Emperor, especially those of the First Cavalry Division of the Guards, turned out to be those most opposed

to him. Composed as they are of officers of the highest ranks of the aristocracy, they were even better acquainted than anyone with the 'scandals of the Court.' They felt that the war was being badly managed, that supplies were not assured, the question of transportation hopeless and badly run, etc., etc.

On arrival at Pskof the delegates were at once received by the Emperor. He had already prepared for his abdication, but refused to be separated from his son, whom he wished from his fatherly affection for him to take with him in his retirement and fall. In face of such tragedy the delegation did not desire to insist. It carried off the declaration which has already been made public in the announcement of abdication.

Meanwhile events had moved very rapidly, and during their return the deputation felt pretty certain that the decision of the Emperor would not satisfy the rebels.

The next morning the members of the Provisional Committee, now turned into a Provisional Government, called on the Grand Duke Michael, and obtained his abdication, thus leaving to the people a free choice of a Government 'régime.'

The Provisional Government thus finds

itself in a position of 'wait and see.' It must wait the decision of the Constituent Assembly, and whether the latter rallies to a Monarchy or Republic, the new members will bow to the decision of the people—they will, in fact, be either Monarchists or Republicans.

The situation of the Provisional Government is therefore a very critical one, and is in sore need of the sympathy and help of the Allies to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion.

Hitherto every Russian has been a partisan of 'war *à l'outrance*,' to final victory, but there are influences at work to prevent this wish being realised.

Regular work must be resumed in the factories. All the material in them is intact, but the workmen have dismissed some of the directors and engineers.

Production is thus reduced in quality and quantity, the latter not being more than 50 per cent.

In the armies one must proceed with great care and slowly and tactfully to restore order and discipline. The first madness of triumph must pass away, and it will only be by slow degrees that one will be able to instil energetic measures.

The Provisional Government is fully aware that its actual issue of instructions savours of weakness, but the fact of this knowledge is its own excuse, and it has the firm intention of recovering after a short period of delay—say a fortnight—the mastery of the situation.

German intrigue is at its full height at present, and the Government is fighting this with all possible energy.

But at the actual moment the greatest enemy of the Government is the committee sitting at the Finland railway station. From the first days of its existence the Provisional Government looked upon its life as merely ephemeral—it daily awaited its defeat. Daily, however, it is receiving proof of sympathy from all parts of Russia, and is strengthening its position to the detriment of the Finland railway station committee. Secessions and divided counsels are showing themselves in this body.

In the first place, the military members affiliated to the Workmen's Union are no longer in complete accord with the workmen whose tendencies are opposed to theirs. Again, among the workmen divisions are appearing, divisions of persons as well as of views. Thus from day to day, indirectly,

the position of the Government is becoming stronger.

The situation, however, is none the less critical, though it continues to improve. But where the situation is really grave is—and I speak from a war point of view—in the navy.

In the Black Sea Fleet hitherto all goes well. This arises from the fact that the admiral in command (*N.B.*—Admiral Koltchak), a man of great energy, quickly recognised the Provisional Government, and he and his officers announced to the men the new developments—the reversal of the old régime, its consequences for the immediate present and the future, and when the echoes of the revolution arrived, they arrived on fully prepared ground.

The situation in the Baltic is very different. There the men mutinied and killed many of their officers. Very few are left, especially at Kronstadt. Bereft of officers, they are none the less conscientiously looking after their ships. All these are intact, great cleanliness is maintained—greater than before; it would almost appear as if the bluejackets wish to prove that a 'free man' is more conscientious than a slave.

This, however, does not do away with the serious position that the right wing of the *ordre de bataille* is 'in the air,' and that the Gulf of Finland is open to the enemy.

It was, as a matter of fact, at Kronstadt that the rebellion was most violent and that the worst massacres took place, comprising as it does the *bataillons de correction* of the army and the fleet, so bandits, criminals, depraved and degenerate men had a free hand. The position nevertheless shows some slight signs of recovery.

The garrison of Kronstadt comprises a few Territorial regiments. The latter, aware of the danger that exists, have asked leave of the Provisional Government to recall to duty the recalcitrant sailors.

The Government, fearing bloodshed, which might extend everywhere, including the actual front, have contented themselves for the moment with sending to Kronstadt a governor who will be acceptable to men in the ranks.

In a fortnight, Mr Goutchakoff added, he hoped to see order restored.

The presence of the Minister for War at our Headquarters, he continued, was to maintain General Alexeieff at the head of the armies. He believes that he is the only man

who at this moment can assume the heavy task. All recognise his merits and his qualities as well as his talents. A few, however, accuse him of want of recognising the need for meeting changes which are necessary in the management of men in the army—of being too strict a disciplinarian, in fact.

This accusation, the Minister pointed out, may have a certain amount of foundation in fact, but this would disappear, he thinks, once the general was put in actual command.

He asked us, however, to back him up by expressing our opinion, if we agreed with him, that Alexeieff was the one man to deal with the situation. This he begged us to do individually, as opportunity occurred, with the different members of the Government now assembled here.

He told us he had come in advance of his colleagues, who arrived later in the day, so as to consult with Alexeieff as to the higher commands of the armies and army corps. This work they completed this morning, and they were in entire accord as to removal of all those who owed their position to 'nepotism.'

I then asked the Minister as to the question

of the 'new sixty divisions' which are being formed.

This introduction, he said, was made against the advice of Alexeieff and without warning to the Minister for War. The new divisions lacked the necessary material. To each regiment is allotted but eight machine-guns, and the men are armed with rifles which should properly be in reserve in depots to make up losses in battle.

The question for consideration is the abolition of these new divisions from the *ordre de bataille.*

The Council of Ministers assembled to-day was to consider measures for the protection of Petrograd against a possible landing of the enemy in the Gulf of Finland.

Such is the situation, as represented to us chiefs of military missions by the Minister.

He concluded as he had begun, with an appeal for our sympathy and assistance. The ambassadors and the diplomats of the Allies were, he said, in close touch with the Government from day to day, but he wished to represent to us as soldiers the close way in which the internal situation affected military operations and the considerations of our General Staffs in the Western theatre. He

begged us to represent this to our respective chiefs, so that they might be fully aware of the situation.

I then thanked him on behalf of my colleagues and self for his clear and frank statement, assuring him of our sympathy and support to him and his Government, as also to General Alexeieff, in the grave and difficult situation which lay before them with all the serious responsibilities of Russia to the Allied cause.

I felt the compliment he had so openly paid to the British system of government, and wished him and his colleagues every success on the intricate problem which lay before them to solve, a success which, so far as we were concerned, we should do our best to ensure. The interview then closed.

I don't like the news of the Baltic Fleet, and the tendency to relax discipline in the armies is, of course, fatal, if it continues.

Generally, from a war point of view, the situation seems to me very bad.

It is, however, obviously necessary, and would be the Emperor's own wish, I know, for us all to do all that lies in our power to support the authorities of law and order,

and retain Russia as a fighting force—if we can.

Both Minister for War and Minister for Foreign Affairs were most complimentary in their remarks to me as representative of the British Army.

They all left this afternoon for Petrograd.

2nd April 1917.

Riggs, the U.S.A. Military Attaché, has arrived, which looks like business, and U.S.A. coming in.

3rd April 1917.

The days are pretty busy with telegraphing and writing on the situation, and I keep the Ambassador at Petrograd informed as well as the War Office, which entails plenty of work for my staff of two, as well as myself. Both Edwards and Porters have worked like Trojans.

Yesterday I met the late Assistant Governor of Warsaw. He gave me an account of what he saw of the revolution at Petrograd. He was dining at the Yacht Club, when suddenly they heard firing, then a motor passed with a wounded officer. Some waiters at the club joined the rebels. He tried to get

home, but a phone message came to say his chauffeur had been shot. So he and some others slept in the reading-room of the club, as the whole place was in an uproar. Next morning he managed to get to the Duma, which had become a general assembly as place of refuge. He stayed there for some time and eventually got off here, this place being, I suppose, looked on as the safest in Russia just now.

He told me that poor old Count Fredericks, after being arrested, was conveyed to some house where he had to sleep on the floor, no food or drink on the first day and very little the next. He is reported to be very ill and still a prisoner, because of this idiotic and false idea that he is pro-German, and of German blood himself. Absolutely untrue.

The Grand Duke Serge came in last night and spoke to me about his position. He says he has no orders, though he has sent in his resignation from the army. I advised him to remain in his own quarters and not come to the staff mess till he heard further news of his plans from the Government.

The Grand Duke Boris is under arrest here in his railway car.

A horrible story come in that an admiral

was taken out, stripped, made to stand on the ice and then burned.

4th April 1917.

Captain Basile Galiaschkine called yesterday. He was with Phillimore and me in a rather warm spot on the Riga front, and is off now to join General Palitzin in France, so routine business is still going on in a kind of way, and I daresay he is not sorry to get out of this turmoil and trouble.

I am told that to-day the Jews are to be emancipated and given full rights as citizens.

6th April 1917.

Left G.H.Q. last night and arrived at Petrograd to-day. Managed to get rooms at Hotel de l'Ours. The journey up was bad. Riggs, who came up, shared a two-berth sleeper with me, Missi, my faithful Russian servant, leaning against the door all night, as private soldiers were all over the place, allowed to go anywhere now and no class distinctions in the trains. One could not move from one's berth, and there was no food, but the men behaved quite well to us.

My rooms good, but no heating, and one sits in a coonskin coat (which I thank my

stars I brought from Canada), and shivers even in that, as this Russian winter is by no means over, and as the American paper said of North Dakota, 'it ain't no Garden of Eden in the winter-time.'

No bread or biscuits, and a boiled egg and marmalade alone are about as nasty a meal as I know; however, I suppose one is devilish lucky to get that.

Streets more or less quiet, but big hungry crowds at the bakers' shops.

Went to the Embassy and heard their news, which was far from cheering. Walked back, passing the 'Winter Palace,' where the sentries leaned against the wall and smoked cigarettes. Some of the soldiers salute me and some don't, though they look shy and half inclined to, but then I suppose they think it would not look sufficiently revolutionary.

At my table at dinner (?) sat a British merchant who has been here many years. Very depressed—sees no end to the trouble. All his workmen on strike and demanding hopeless wages. Thinks there will be another sample of revolution ere long, and I expect he is right.

Imperial family rumoured to have gone

to Peterhof. There is much anxiety about them here.

Just before I left Headquarters yesterday the Grand Duke Serge called to see me. He said he had something to tell me personally as he did not expect to be at G.H.Q. when I returned. He had just received by the hands of an officer a letter from the Empress to the Emperor. The officer had escaped from arrest with it. The Grand Duke wanted me to convey somehow to the Emperor that he had burned the letter.

I told him, of course, that I had no means of communicating with the Emperor, and it would not do for me to try to get into communication with him.

A newspaper says that a letter from the Emperor to me, saying that the Imperial family were all well, had been seized. It adds that I am a friend of H.I.M.—not in any unfriendly terms—only just makes the remark.

I have never received the letter, but he had said before leaving that he would write to me, and doubtless did so.

The present Government will evidently want all the support it can get. At present their position is between 'the devil' of weakening their own hands too much by

weakening of discipline in the army and navy, and the 'deep sea' of further revolution.

EASTER SUNDAY. *8th April* 1917.

Last Easter fell on the same day as the Russian Easter. We were with the Emperor to celebrate it, and this—no Emperor and a shaky republic.

Went to the War Office to see the Minister. A crowd of soldiers in all sorts of clothes and deputations of sorts waiting to see him, and he is obliged to see them all in turn. Saw him eventually at 5.30, and he is to take me back to G.H.Q. in his car.

9th April 1917.

The streets are full of loafing soldiers smoking cigarettes and talking; no more halting, facing a general and saluting when one passes. Every day parades of soldiers and singing of the *Marseillaise* at the square where the 'victims' of the revolution are buried.

I really believe the latter will rise from their graves and ask them to stop singing if they keep at it all the time. Pleasant for our Embassy, which adjoins.

The people are like naughty children who

have run away from school, but the situation grows more and more serious every day. Soldiers idle, workmen idle, and clamouring for more wages.

If the armies don't pull themselves together I see nothing but anarchy left.

The Press communiqué which an American company publishes here with cuttings from Russian papers says:

'On the 19th March (?) Nicholas II., after receiving proper authorisation from the commander, sent the following telegram to the representative of the British Army at the front:—

'General Hanbury-Williams.

'Children getting better. Feeling better myself. Greetings.—Nicolas.

'Before sending off this telegram the officer in charge recomposed it. General Hanbury-Williams is one of the close friends of the ex-Emperor.'

(I never received this message and wonder how it read before it was recomposed.)

11*th April* 1917.

Got back to G.H.Q. yesterday, having travelled in comfort with the War Minister.

Went off at 11 to see General Klembovski, who takes Alexeieff's work in latter's absence.

He is somewhat hopeful of things getting better, but even if the soldiers are, as he says, annoyed with the working men for 'slacking,' I fear it won't make much impression on the latter.

I then said that I did not think the entry of the U.S.A. into the war was half advertised enough in Russia. One clings to every straw to help now, and I thought it should be well published that a great republic like the U.S.A. having determined to join the battle line, it behoved this new republic to stand by, and that all the men at the various fronts should have this well impressed upon them.

Every effort should be made to 'drown' this 'stop the war' crowd. The matter is to be taken up with Goutchakoff.

12*th April* 1917.

Late last night I got a telegram saying I was to return to England. I am not sorry, as I don't see any prospects of much use here. I am sorry, however, to leave my friends among the Russians, with whom I have been close on three years now, and seen so much. No

one who has lived with them as I have can fail to like them.

16*th April* 1917.

Sent a message home on the situation, a depressing one, I fear, but so far as I can see this country is 'down and out' so far as fighting assistance goes anyhow.

17*th April* 1917.

I ride about the country much as usual. No one interferes with me, and though I do not wear a red armlet, I am recognised, I suppose, as an eccentric Englishman, unworried by revolutions.

20*th April* 1917.

To-day I received the following letter from General Alexeieff, now Commander-in-Chief, to whom I had announced my approaching departure:—

STAFKA,
7/20 *Avril* 1917.

MON CHER GÉNÉRAL,—C'est avec un sentiment de profond regret que j'apprends la nouvelle de votre prochain départ. Après ces longs mois de travail commun marqués

par les relations les plus cordialement confiantes, soyez assuré, mon cher Général, que je garderais pour vous un sentiment d'estime très profonde que partageront, j'en suis sur, tous mes collaborateurs.

Heureux de penser que vous emporterez un bon souvenir de votre sejour aux armées Russes, nous ferons tout ce qui dependra de nous pour inspirer a votre successeur les mêmes sentiments.

Il peut étre assuré de trouver chez nous toute la confiance à laquelle a droit le représentant d'une grande armée Alliée, pour laquelle nous nourissons une sympathie que double une profonde admiration.

(*Sd.*) ALEXEIEFF.

We were all invited to a meeting of workmen and others at Dvinsk to-day, but thought it wiser not to mix ourselves up in a business of this kind.

Major-General Sir Charles Barter is to succeed me here and I wish him luck in what I fear will be but a thankless task.

A very kind letter from Sir George Buchanan on the news of my approaching departure. I have received much kindness from him throughout.

22nd April 1917.

At dinner I was shown an extract from a German paper practically expressing the hope that Buchanan would be assassinated.

A long interview with General Denikin, the new C.G.S., about Mesopotamia and General Maude.

On 18th May I bid farewell to Alexeieff. I asked him what I could say on my return to England.

He simply said that he intended to do all that lay in his power to keep the armies fighting, and to continue the war, but that he must be supported in matters of discipline, which, as I well knew, had become more than lax. If he was not supported he should resign.

Meanwhile Goutchakoff had resigned and Kerenski had taken over.

(On my arrival in England I heard that Alexeieff had resigned, and I knew what it meant. The night before I left he sent his son-in-law over to see me and hand me his photograph.)

THE EMPEROR AFTER LEAVING HEADQUARTERS

WHAT happened after the Emperor's departure from Headquarters 'under arrest,' with two representatives of the temporary Government in charge, on the 21st March is more or less a matter of surmise, but the records of M. Pierre Gilliard, the Swiss tutor of the Tsarevitch (whom I knew well as a devoted friend of the charge he had under him), are pretty clear evidence of the events which succeeded, leading up to the final tragedy.

His work, now published, *Le tragique destin de Nicolas II et de sa famille*, gives an account of the life led at Tsarskoye Selo and Tobolsk, etc., and brings out many points of interest showing the unfailing devotion to the cause of the Allies of both Emperor and Empress.

On his departure the Emperor addressed the following message to his comrades of the army :—

8 (21) *March* 1917.

I address you for the last time, soldiers so dear to my heart.

Since I have renounced in my name, and that of my son, the throne of Russia, the powers I exercised have been transmitted to the Provisional Government which has been formed on the initiative of the Imperial Duma.

May God help it to lead Russia on the path of glory and prosperity.

May God help you also, glorious soldiers, to defend our native land against a cruel enemy. For two and a half years you have in every hour undergone the fatigues and strain of a wearing campaign, much blood has been spilt, great efforts have been crowned with success, and already the hour is at hand when Russia with her splendid Allies will finally crush by one joint and dashing effort the last resistance of the enemy.

A war such as this unknown in history must be continued to the final and definite victory. Whoever dreams of peace or desires it—at this moment—is a traitor to his country and yields it to the enemy.

In this I know that every soldier worthy of the name agrees with me.

Carry out your duty, protect our beloved

and glorious country, submit yourselves to the Provisional Government, render obedience to your chiefs, and remember that any slackness in your service means a gain to our enemies.

With the firm conviction that the boundless love that you have for our great country will ever remain in your hearts, I pray that God may bless you, and that St George the great martyr may lead you to victory.

(*Signed*) NICOLAS.

(*Countersigned*) ALEXEIEFF, C.G.S.

For reasons of risk of some reaction, I suppose, this message was not allowed to reach the troops.

The Emperor reached Tsarskoye Selo on the following day, the 22nd, to find additional trouble in the illness of his children. Prince Dolgorouky (faithful to the end) accompanied him. Others would have gone as well if permitted, but I know that it was the Emperor's own wish that as few as possible should remain in his service, as he considered everyone available should now render services which had been personal to him to the army or the country in some form.

During their first period of captivity the

Imperial family were no doubt buoyed up by the hope of their removal to some place at a distance from the turbulent seat of trouble at Petrograd, possibly out of the country altogether, or to the spot to which the Emperor himself told me he wished to go—the Crimea.

It was not till mid-August, however, that they were warned to start for a destiny unknown to them, but which turned out to be Tobolsk.

Meanwhile the days, dreary and terribly sad as they must have been, were passed with courage and fortitude by the whole party. Monsieur Gilliard shows how the Emperor, keen as always on exercise and outdoor life, dug in the gardens, chopped and sawed wood, while the rest of the family as soon as they were once more out of the doctor's hands joined him in some of these forms of occupation, the Tsarevitch continuing his lessons under the friendly tutor, the Emperor and Empress assisting in some of them.

On the 15th April, Easter Sunday, it is noted that the Emperor specially joined in the prayers for the temporary Government.

Out of doors all the time they were followed by armed sentries.

Later on, however, Kerenski, whose first attitude towards the Emperor was reported as brusque and rude, appears to have been more sympathetic, though, on being asked whether they could all be removed to Livadia, he said that was for the moment impossible.

Baroness Buxhoeveden, Mlle Schneider, and Doctor Botkine remained of the party.

Newspapers, of kinds, reached them from time to time, and early in May the Emperor seems to have learned to his great grief of the intrigues of the extremists to withdraw from the war, of the increasing desertions in the armies, all pointing to a general débâcle which it seemed doubtful if the Provisional Government would be able to arrest.

He is spoken of as following the march of affairs as closely as possible, his special anxiety being that his country should remain faithful to the Allied cause—no thought of self, all the time considering loyalty to the great cause.

'Roussky has resigned,' he says. 'On asking the men to take the offensive they refused. If true, that is the end. What disgrace and shame. We shall leave it to our Allies to be overwhelmed, and then it will be our turn.'

Next day he is somewhat more hopeful

again; what gives him hope is the Russian 'love of exaggeration.' He finds it impossible to believe that in two months the army can have gone utterly to pieces like this.

The little boy's gun (which I remember his playing with so well at Headquarters, and his leaving the dining-room one evening, a tremendous shout of laughing and talking upstairs, when it was found that he had put on the little toy bayonet and cornered two orderlies attending on him with it) is taken away from him.

This kind of foolish and unnecessary acts of spite might well have been spared them.

Meanwhile Bolshevism was making way in Russia.

The July offensive, of which so much was expected, and which started well, suddenly became a disgraceful collapse.

The powers of evil had gained their way.

At the end of July come rumours of a move from Tsarskoye Selo.

On 13th August Kerenski, then leader of the Government, warns them of their departure that night.

It is possible that the rapidly increasing signs of Bolshevist ascendency induced

Kerenski to take a step which humanity urged upon him as making a better provision for the safeguarding of the Imperial family. It was probably, by now, hopeless to attempt a removal from Russia, possible as that might have been in the early days, and the alternative was to get them as far as possible from the seat of everlasting trouble—Petrograd.

About now and by degrees the shouts of those that triumphed over a Russia renewed and refreshed by the sweeping out of autocracy and pro-Germanism began to fade into whispers of discontent at the developments which were unexpectedly—to them—taking place.

Was it credible that this free and rejuvenated people should talk with the enemy in the gate? Where is Brest-Litovsk? Why, surely it must be a station somewhere in Germany, they said.

'What is Bolshevism?' they asked. 'Oh,' said some of its friends, 'it is the saving of society.'

But gradually when this devil-fish began to spread its ugly tentacles over other lands, including our own, they began to look about for the proofs of its good work.

Famine, misery, pestilence, encouragement and use of alien and coloured men to do some of the dirty work that they could not get their own to do, and then, after completing every devilish task of their own, acknowledged failure.

The purifying stage of which so much was said and written has brought about a queer state of purity.

Give it time, say its supporters.

But people are a little tired of giving time.

Tobolsk was reached on the 19th August, and the circumstances surrounding the incarceration there were more or less similar to those of Tsarskoye Selo, though they suffered from want of space for the exercise and occupations which were so necessary to help them.

The Empress throughout the sad story appears as a devoted wife and good mother, brave in her affliction, and, whatever may have been her thoughts as to the causes of disaster, determined to do all she could for the husband and children whom she loved.

To the Emperor the inevitable collapse of Russia as a fighting factor for the Allies became a source of terrible grief and anxiety.

The reported hope of Korniloff's offer to fight the growing power of the Bolshevists proved a false hope, as the offer was discarded.

He suffered still more because his sacrifice of himself by at once abdicating was proving to be of no service to Russia, and there was worse to follow than any of the mistakes or failures of autocracy.

No newspapers and little news made the time still more difficult to bear, and by the middle of November Bolshevism was reigning supreme.

It must have been a sad Christmas indeed which followed, though all tried their best to help one another.

February brought with it the great cold of these regions, and continually depressing news. The Germans advancing everywhere and the Russians putting up no resistance.

Both Emperor and Empress appeared, according to M. Gilliard's account, about now to have some faint hopes of prospects of escape, but each was anxious not to leave their own country.

In mid-March the report of the Brest-Litovsk treaty reached their ears. This to the Emperor was an additional disgrace, and he scoffed at the idea of accepting the reported

offer of the Germans to take charge of him and his family.

'A disgrace to Russia,' as he called this treaty, 'and equivalent to its suicide. How can the Germans have treated with the scoundrels who have betrayed their own country? But I am sure such actions will bring them no success. They will never save them from ruin.' (A pretty true prophecy as things turned out.) 'If their offer is not a plan to discredit me, it is simply an insult that is offered to me.'

And the Empress (the much talked-of pro-German) added: 'After the way they have ruined the Emperor, I would rather die in Russia than be saved by the Germans.'

On the 26th March any hopes of escape appeared finally to be removed by the arrival of a detachment of 'red guards' from Omsk. The guarding became more strict, and meanwhile the Tsarevitch had a fresh attack of illness.

The party now (13th April) consisted of Countess Hendrikoff, Mlle Schneider, General Tatichtcheff, Prince Dolgorouky, and Mr Gibbs, the English tutor to the Tsarevitch, in addition to those previously mentioned.

On the 25th April the Bolshevist Com-

missary, Yakovlef, announced the intention of removing the Emperor. He at the same time assured the anxious party that no harm would come to him, and that no opposition would be placed in the way of someone accompanying him.

The Empress, torn between anxiety for her husband and her children, and especially the little son who lay ill, finally decided to accompany the Emperor.

A veil may be drawn over the tragedy of parting that must have been theirs as they passed out into the darkness and cold of a Russian night in two little country carts.

The Empress, always delicate in health, faced all this, degradation, separation from her children and terrible grief, with but one thought—not to allow her beloved husband to be exposed to risks and dangers which she also could not share.

On the 8th May the sad and anxious watchers for news received information of the arrival of their Majesties at Ekaterinburg.

News of their own departure now came, and on arrival at Ekaterinburg M. Gilliard was not permitted to rejoin his charge. His story closes with the sad evidences, which have since been gathered and published, of

one of the most brutal crimes which history can produce.

It was obviously my duty to make no attempt to communicate with the Emperor once he had left Headquarters, and I made none, constantly as he and all his were in my thoughts.

I had hoped that some means would be found for their protection, and the Government at first formed, and that of Kerenski afterwards, took, and intended to take, every precaution possible for the safeguarding of the Imperial family—according to all the information one can gather.

It was not till the reins fell into other hands that it was thought well to bring to an end the lives of not only those to whom fault was falsely attributed, but also of perfectly innocent children.

Of one thing I feel sure, if all the history one reads of their end is true—I feel sure that Nicholas II. went to his death with no trembling of his heart for himself, but only for those near and dear to him, and for the country which no enemy and no detractor could say but that he loved it well.

The published telegram from the Emperor to me, which became, of course, public

property, is referred to in *The Fall of the Romanoffs*, by the author of *Russian Court Memoirs*, on page 188, thus:

'The only time the arrested ex-Tsar asked to infringe the regulations of not sending any letters or telegrams was to send a wire to General Williams at Headquarters, with whom the former Monarch had always been on the friendliest terms. The request was granted, and the following telegram, in English, was sent to Mohilev:—

'"The children are recovering. Self feeling better. Greetings.—NICHOLAS."'

The same work on page 150 says, referring to the hurricane of abuse hurled at the Romanoffs past and present, and the way the papers spoke of the Tsar's intemperate habits:

'This statement is flatly repudiated by all those who knew him intimately. The British General W., who was a constant inmate of the Stafka, and had daily intercourse with the Sovereign, frequently sharing his repasts, declares that in all these months he never once saw the Emperor in a state of inebriation.'

The General W. referred to is, of course, myself, and the statement is perfectly true.

I have described him in the pages above as a 'fresh-air man,' a true description.

Never in the whole course of a long and close acquaintance did I see him exceed in the very slightest degree, and I know perfectly well that all those of my colleagues who served with me would bear me out in this statement.

Apart from the perfectly clear evidence I have given, it is obvious that no man could work and play, as I saw him do so long and so often, if he suffered from the defects mentioned. I saw him constantly, late at night, early in the morning, and frequently met him on his long walks.

However, I think that I have said enough in these pages to refute these and other malicious statements about a monarch who, even granted faults of character which may have been attributed to him, never failed to be a gentleman—and the kindest of friends.

To those who knew him it is but a superfluity to say this.

To those who did not know him, but criticised him as if they did, I beg to tender the hope that they will—if not to the full—exercising the privilege of '*De mortuis*, etc.,' anyhow spare his memory from accusations

which are as unjust as they are untrue. I speak of what I saw, and what I knew. And I have knocked about the world sufficiently to keep my eyes pretty wide open.

The influence of the Grand Duke Nicholas, as Commander-in-Chief, and of the Emperor afterwards, in the same post, was entirely and absolutely for simple, plain and sober living.

During the whole of my long service in Russia I never saw a drunken soldier, till after the revolution. My old comrades of the Russian Army would, I think, stand by me in giving full justice to the statements I have made.

Surely there has been sufficient tragedy in remembrances of Russia without an additional act being staged, with not the slightest foundation for fact.

EMPEROR AND EMPRESS

It is difficult to offer an estimate of character of the one without the other. More difficult, perhaps, to speculate upon what would have happened if they had never met, and he had found another consort.

The Emperor—till too late—was a confirmed autocrat, apart, I believe, from the influence of the Empress, who had identical views as to the government of the country.

In a speech made in January 1895 he had said: 'Let them [the people] know that I, devoting all my efforts to the prosperity of the nation, will preserve the principles of autocracy as firmly and unswervingly as my late father of imperishable memory.'

It was the teaching of his boyhood, and he felt it his duty to hand these principles on.

It is possible, however, that had he married someone else, possessed of a clear head and the influence which might have been exercised with him by one who, though not a courtier, was so near him as to be available at any time to suggest and advise, circum-

stances might have worked out quite differently. As it was, even a courtier who had the good sense to speak out with honest endeavour—and how rare such courtiers are—to be of service went to the wall. Whether that was the independent action of the Emperor alone, or of some additional pressure from the Empress, I do not know. The fact remains that an already confirmed autocrat became more so under her influence.

That they honestly believed that it was the right system for the government of their country is certain. Thus there existed a couple working hand in hand, as they believed and imagined, for the good of their country, and the dangers of the autocratic system became intensified by the fact that the stronger influence of the two was that of the Empress, whose ill health and neurotic character not only cut her off from the outside world of Russia, but brought her under other influences, which reacted again upon the Emperor and finally brought him, loyal and devoted as he was, to his fall.

Appointments and dismissals of ministers lay entirely in the hands of the Emperor, but the adviser who brought them about was in most cases the Empress.

The combination of an Emperor so devoted to his Empress that her word was law, and of an Empress led unconsciously by the worst possible advisers, brought about their ruin and that—for the time being—of their country.

According to M. Gilliard's account of the last days of the Imperial family, those fine qualities of the Empress which showed themselves in her care and devotion to the sick and wounded during the war became still more evident in the days of distress, misery and ignominy which crowned the end.

Even her critics and her enemies, and she had many, will accord her a meed of praise for the courage and devotion which, even in what must have been the most intense purgatory to her, she showed unselfishly for her husband and children.

And so in death they were not divided.

I was much struck, closely interested as I was in Russian affairs, at the apparent lack of interest, almost amounting to indifference, with which the news of the fate of the Russian Imperial family was received in England. It was probably to be accounted for by two reasons, the number and rapidity of the march of events connected with a great war and its sequences, and the uncertainty

as to the truth of the reports, confirmation or contradiction being almost daily reported, till a lack of interest ensued.

The fact remains, however, that one of the greatest tragedies in history was, to all appearances, quickly forgotten, except by those to whom it came very near.

As to the alleged Pro-Germanism of the Emperor and Empress, I think I have said enough in the preceding pages to dispel the idea of this accusation.

I may add another note upon the subject.

As is known to those taking an interest in the question, a commission was appointed by the Revolutionary Government with the duty assigned to it of searching through all the letters, both official and private, of the Emperor and Empress.

The Commission apparently did its work with zeal and such enthusiasm as can be found by those who enjoy the prying into the personal and private and family affairs of other people.

No doubt, all agog for some scandalous discovery, or proof of guilt by the discovery of letters to the enemy, or expressions of affection for the Germans, they scanned the pages before them, word for word.

What was the result ?

M. V. M. Roudnieff, one of its members, allowed indignation to master his surprise, and published his personal report, proving to the world at large that not a jot or a tittle of evidence was to be found.

The mysterious intrigues of the Empress with the enemy vanished.

The accusations of disloyalty on the part of the Emperor were exploded.

Those who knew them received this news with no surprise. Those who professed to know them, and maligned them, probably preferred to look elsewhere for any other kind or other sort of news they could find.

What followed ? The irony of fate threw the country where accusations of disloyalty had dethroned an Emperor and Empress, into the arms of the very enemy with whom they had been supposed to intrigue, and Brest-Litovsk and Bolshevism ruined Russia.

THE TSAREVITCH

ALEXIS NICOLAIEVITCH was about eleven years old when I first saw him in 1915.

I had expected, from the many stories that had been afloat concerning him, to find a very delicate and not very lively boy. Delicate he certainly was, suffering as he did from an illness from which entire recovery was said to be impossible, but in the periods of what may be called his good health he had all the spirits and the mischief of any ordinary boy of that age.

On our first acquaintance he was as shy as one might expect on suddenly being thrown among a big crowd of strangers at the General Headquarters, not only of his own nationality, but of all of us—the Allied representatives.

The shyness soon disappeared, and gradually he became almost a spoilt child among us, if anything could spoil such an attractive and merry little fellow as he was.

On our first meeting he followed his father, the Emperor, round the circle which we made in the ante-room of the Government House

at Mohilev, where he stayed, shaking hands with each of us in turn.

At meals he sat next the Emperor, opposite me, as I sat next to Count Fredericks as a rule, and opposite the Emperor. He wore khaki uniform and long Russian boots, and was very proud of himself as a soldier, had excellent manners, and spoke various languages well and clearly.

As time went on and his first shyness wore off, he treated us as old friends, and as he passed each of us to bid us good-day had always some little bit of fun with us. With me it was to make sure that each button on my coat was properly fastened, a habit which naturally made me take great care to have one or two unbuttoned, in which case he used at once to stop and tell me I was 'untidy again,' give a sigh at my lack of attention to these details, and stop and carefully button me all up again.

We then used to be invited by him to go into a small alcove room out of the dining-room while the rest of the party were eating the *hors d'œuvres* which always begin a Russian meal at a side table. In that little room every conceivable game went on, a 'rag,' in fact, ending most likely with a game

of football with anything that came handy, the Belgian general, of whom he was very fond, and used always to call 'Papa de Ricquel,' being a man of no mean girth, giving great opportunities for attack. The devoted tutor was almost in despair, and it generally ended by the intervention of the Emperor, by which time the small boy was carefully hidden behind the curtain.

He then used to reappear with a twinkle in his eye and solemnly march in to take his place at table.

There he would begin again by a bread-pellet attack across the table and a game of what he called polo at me, with more bread pellets, which risked all the Imperial china and glasses pretty considerably.

If, however, he had a stranger sitting next to him he had all the courtesy and charm of his father, talking freely and asking sensible questions. The moment, however, that we adjourned to the ante-room the games used to begin again, and went on fast and furious till either the Emperor or his tutor carried him off.

Nagorny, the big sailor attendant, to whom he was devoted, was always about and somewhere handy—a great big cheerful and

adoring servant of his little master. (His figure is no doubt well known from the frequent pictures that have appeared of him with the Tsarevitch, and he is reported to have been murdered with the others in the beginning of June 1918. He would, we may be sure, have stuck to his post and to his charge till the last. His body was found on the scene of the execution two months later.)

In the afternoons the Emperor used to take his son out boating or to play in the sands, where he made little fortifications and enjoyed himself as any other small boy would do.

He was always very well turned out in his uniform, and looked especially smart in his Cossack uniform.

On some occasions he accompanied the Emperor to see the troops at the front, where he was as popular as he was everywhere else.

He had great love for animals, his chief companions being a spaniel and a big grey cat, shown with him in a photograph taken at Headquarters.

At times the illness from which he suffered got hold of him, and it was touching to see the way that everyone at our Headquarters felt for this cheerful and happy boy, who

seemed as healthy as could be in ordinary times.

He slept in his father's room at G.H.Q.—always went with him to the church services, turning round very often to see if his 'Allied' friends were there, and giving a wink of his eye as soon as he saw us.

When visiting the troops on 15th November his tutor relates how the Emperor, when inspecting General Chtcherbatchef's troops, told every man who had served right through the war to hold up his hand. Among the thousands present but very few hands were shown, making a great impression on the little soldier standing by his father.

His health was, of course, a continual anxiety, and certainly in the winter he would probably have been better at home than in a place like the G.H.Q., where for a boy of that age there was more or less continual excitement. Latterly this was arranged, and it was a mixture of the Empress's anxiety for him and her wish at the same time that he should be with his father, to whom his visits gave such pleasure, which finally ended in his leaving for Tsarskoye Selo, where also his education could be better continued.

He was bright and quick enough to

appreciate, no doubt, the fact of revolution and abdication, but it is probable that his young age, added to the devotion of all around him, prevented the disaster of the end to the throne being a too marked impression. Almost up to the last, and when his already weak health was much overtaxed by discomfort and privations to which he was, of course, totally unaccustomed, his lessons seem to have been continued. Of the final tragedy which put an end to this little life in such a cruel and heartless fashion one prefers not to speak.

There is but one outstanding fact to keep before one, a doubt whether, had he lived, instead of being murdered, he would ever have had sufficient strength physically to occupy the throne should it have been open to him to do so.



The Tsarevitch, with some of us, at Mohileff. 1916.

THE GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS

In August 1914 I arrived at the Headquarters of the Russian Army in the Field to take up my post as Chief of the British Military Mission.

The Commander-in-Chief and his Staff were located in trains drawn up near the station of Baranovitchi. My quarters consisted of a small compartment about the size of one of our 'sleepers,' in which I was to live all the time, except on occasional visits to the various armies.

The morning after my arrival an A.D.C. appeared and I went off to be presented to the gallant Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armies. The Grand Duke welcomed me very heartily and said a few complimentary words about the British Alliance.

On first acquaintance he appeared somewhat cold and reserved, but our friendship rapidly made headway, growing later on into a cordial and unforgettable intimacy.

I know him for a gallant gentleman, a keen soldier and a most kind friend, whose life

I trust may be spared to see the country he loves so well under happier conditions; a commanding figure and a commanding personality, who would, I believe, had a Romanoff been left to create order out of chaos, have done much to help his country and the Allied cause. I little thought in those days that I should have to say my final farewell to him as a Russian officer under such tragic circumstances.

Our train was drawn up with some others in a pine forest alongside a few huts which served as the 'workshops' of the C.-in-C. and the General Staff. The troops of the escort were quartered a little way off, the train being guarded by a few Cossacks and Gendarmerie.

We breakfasted, lunched and dined in the dining-car at small tables, mine being that of the Grand Duke Peter, with Prince Galitzin and the French Military Attaché, General Marquis de la Guiche. Next to our table was that of the C.-in-C. who, as a deeply religious man and devoted to his Church, had with him not only the Chief of the General Staff, General Yanuskevich, but Father George, that gallant and devoted Russian chaplain who had done good service in the



Chiefs of Allied Military Missions, with Russian Staff Officers, at Baranovitchi. 1914.

Japanese war, winning the Cross of St George.

We had many happy talks across from table to table during our long months together. The C.-in-C. being a keen sportsman—especially about the Waterloo Cup, in which he had an entry—gave us plenty of opportunity of discussing other matters besides war, and in these he was always joined by Prince Galitzin (whom, alas, like so many others of those days, I can never see again), a fine horseman and a good man to hounds, who had raced and hunted in England, and was head of the Emperor's *chasse*, but as a great friend of the Grand Duke, attached to the latter's personal staff. Many a ride did we have together through the forests and over that dreary prairie country surrounding them. Plenty of chaff and laughter passed between the two tables, and especially, I remember, over some of the messages of congratulation received by the C.-in-C. at the New Year, one of which, from an unknown lady at Biarritz, was short, concise and witty: 'Neuf pour Monseigneur—Baccarat pour les Boches.'

Operations and military affairs were never discussed at table, and the Staff were strictly

forbidden to give any information except that approved and passed by the C.G.S. or the Q.M.G., the latter answering to our Director of Military Operations.

On Sundays, saints' days, etc., and on occasions of victory or reverse we all attended the little wooden church in the camp, with its solemn service and beautiful singing.

All the Headquarters troops were drawn up at the entrance to the Church, Guards and Cossacks, Cossacks of the Guard and the rest, all in khaki, with long grey overcoats reaching to their feet—still as rocks—looking almost like a line of stone statues against the background of the pine forest.

Here we waited till suddenly a fanfare of trumpets rang out, and in the distance coming along the road from the train there marched, stern-faced and head erect, that great and, to the army he loved so well, almost mystic figure—the Grand Duke Nicholas.

His staff, seeming dwarf-like in comparison, followed till he reached the line and swung round facing his men—facing them in the real sense of the word—looking at them absolutely straight, eye to eye—and called out to all ranks the customary 'good-day.'

With the rattle of presenting arms came

the answering shout from every man in reply. Then briskly and quickly he passed along the line, his face gleaming with pleasure and pride, its sternness momentarily relaxed, as he dropped a word here and there to some well-known figure, and so we all slowly filed into the church.

The deep-toned voice of the priest in the absolute silence sounding almost like the breaking of the sea on a still night, the solemn sadness of the singing, the rush of incense through the air—all linger in some corner of one's memory, like many other brain pictures which flash across one's eyes at unexpected moments, when at unawares a sound or a scent or a turn in the road suddenly brings back scenes of great happiness or great sorrow.

And Russia, to me, is full of these. Some of joy and victory, many, alas, of broken men and broken hearts and all the other tragedies of a great upheaval.

Other memories crowd in on me—how I met the Grand Duke one early morning walking along the wooden sidewalk which stretched alongside our train, and how he came smiling up and, apologising for 'Russian customs,' threw his arms round my neck and told me of the taking of Lemberg.

Then the day that he sent for me to his room and with his C.G.S. told me of the very serious position of the armies in the Caucasus, of the appeals from that quarter for the retention of some of the troops destined for the German front, and of his determination still to send them, so as to avoid any failure towards the Allies, great as the risk of the Turkish advance might be.

Was it possible, he asked, for the British to help in any way to draw off the Turks?

I had to answer that in those early days I feared we had no troops ready, we were short in France, and those in our own country were only 'in the making.' Possibly, I said, some demonstration might be made by our ships to alarm the Turks. Anyhow I promised to go at once to Petrograd (as I had no decent cipher in those days) and send off a message.

I left that afternoon, went to the British Embassy on arrival next day, and got off a telegram, through the ambassador, which began the history of the Dardanelles. But all that is another story.

The worst day that year was when I was again sent for and told the truth of what had been rumoured as to the lack of guns

and munitions. He was quiet and cool as ever, but disappointment was written in every line of his face, and again I had to go off and do what I could to help. Again another story and a long one.

When in 1915 the decision was announced that the Emperor was to take over the command 'in the field,' the Grand Duke sent for me to say good-bye on his departure for the Caucasus.

It was the break-up of a period of comradeship, passed in times of victory and defeat, with a vista of great anxiety for the future. The air was full of wild stories of intrigue, and the mischief-makers were everywhere busy with the usual tales of calumny and prognostications of disaster, but in the midst of all these, calm and dignified, true and straight as steel, and, above all, loyal to his Emperor and to his Allies, the retiring Commander-in-Chief remained the same upright soldier and gentleman.

I remember the little room at the bottom of the stairs on the right-hand side of the door, and his step forward, with that sudden bright smile and extended hand, while I felt more like crying than laughing, possibly with some vague anticipation of disaster in my head.

He said that no doubt I knew that the Emperor had decided to take over command, and therefore was dispatching him to the Caucasus as Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief. He had but to obey his Imperial master, to whom he felt sure I would be the same as I had been to him, a good and loyal friend. He begged me to tell Lord Kitchener that Alexeieff as Chief of the General Staff to the Emperor would be a most excellent link with our army chiefs, that if he (the G.D.) had been given his choice at the beginning of the war he would have selected him as his own C.G.S.—this in no spirit of criticism of Yanuskevich, who had always served him loyally and well, and whom he was taking with him to the Caucasus. Indeed his chief anxiety appeared to be that I should not let any hint appear that any change was taking place except to the advantage of the Russian army and its Allies. Beneath all this smiling conversation I could see well what he was going through, and I think the nerves of both parties to the scene were on the stretch.

For the end of it was that his arms were round my neck and he kissed me on both cheeks in the Russian fashion, with the re-

peated injunction to be sure 'and be the same to the Emperor that you have been to me.'

He had much professional pride and ambition of the most commendable kind—namely, that of being a real Commander-in-Chief and not only a figure-head, the handicap of birth and position tending always to stand in his way as a professional soldier, and possibly to prevent those around him from running any risks which might be incurred by more frequent and nearer visits on his part to the troops in the fighting line.

A very strict disciplinarian, he at the same time commanded the respect and confidence of all who knew him. No one could believe him capable of a dishonourable act, and he took up his command in a full sense of the serious responsibility with which he was entrusted, not only as involving the cause of his own country, but also that of its Allies. Nothing occurred in his short period as C.-in-C. of all the Russian Armies in the Field to disprove the high estimate which had been put on his abilities; indeed in the secondary position which he occupied later in the Caucasus theatre of war he added, if possible, greater laurels to those he had previously gathered.

He gave credit to those of his commanders who served him well without any *arrière-pensée* in regard to his own position. Jealous of that, he was invariably just and kind to them. Though stern and almost reticent by habit, he still had that wonderful influence over his commanders and staff that made them feel it was a pleasure to serve him, and he was willing to trust his generals in the making and execution of their plans. Personally I should say he was self-reliant but not over-confident.

In the grave and disastrous periods of 'munition difficulties' my own opinion is, and nothing will alter it, that he was badly served, not alone, that is to say, by the War Office at Petrograd—this was obvious—but by his own Staff. The link between them and the War Office was lacking and the line taken—'It is our business to fight and yours to supply'—was too rigid, and a situation arose which with better organisation should not have reached such grave results.

There is an obvious retort about 'people who live in glass houses, etc.,' but our own failures in this regard should have served as an example to the Russians. The only occasion upon which the Grand Duke spoke

to me in a strain of bitterness was—I well remember it—when standing in the pine woods just alongside our train, he turned to me and reflected in strong terms upon what he called our failure to support the Russian army in these munition matters.

I sometimes think, when I look back on these anxious days, that it was fear of this great, stern-faced man that induced those serving him to throw a 'rosy' light on a situation of deadly danger, and fail to tell him the truth regarding Russian delays till too late, when the blame was turned upon the Allies.

Surely, however, had circumstances been otherwise, and there had been no munition failure, followed by the intricate thread of circumstances which led to the collapse of his country, the Grand Duke's name would have stood out as that of a great commander.

There is another side to the picture which I have endeavoured to paint. It shows his great sense of humour, the good stories he would tell, his delight in talking over questions of sport and so on, and his unfailing hospitality and enjoyment of a good dinner in good company, followed by the enormous cigar, over which he would chaff us who were his

neighbours at table, and laugh at the plans which we proposed for the days of peace, when we hoped to meet under other circumstances. And I remember well my saying to him one day that he would have to visit London after the war, and his laughing dread of the sea passage which he hated. But the curtain of tragedy was soon to fall upon the stage of comedy.

We met again during his occasional visits to the Emperor's headquarters, and kept in touch by correspondence through Yanuskevich and Galitzin. He invited me to pay him a visit at his Caucasus headquarters, but the distance and the many ties of my work prevented me from going, much as I wished to do so.

Then came the Revolution.

For a short period, and indeed after the departure of the Emperor as a prisoner, it was still thought that the Grand Duke would remain on as Commander-in-Chief of the Armies, so much so that we chiefs of the Allied military missions sent him a telegram to assure him of our readiness to place ourselves at his disposal.

It had been the wish of the Emperor that this arrangement should be made.

Under the impression that this plan was to be carried through, his Imperial Highness, after a journey that took the appearance of an almost triumphal march, arrived at Mohileff, and immediately I was summoned to see him in his train, drawn up at that station, which was the scene of so many historic events. I found him the same as ever, calm, cool and collected, and we had long conversations over the terrible turn of affairs.

The armies were by now in a state of nervous confusion, the Revolution running along like fire on the prairie, from the fleet and northern armies downwards to the south.

Meanwhile events had moved rapidly, and rumours came of a telegram which had not reached him—that no Romanoff was to remain in command of any kind. Concerning this he told me that he would make no move of any sort till he received some official confirmation from the temporary Government, which it was his wish not to embarrass in any way whatever.

In the intervals of a very busy period I spent a good deal of my time with the Grand Duke in his train, indeed taking most of my

meals there, for he had expressed the wish that my colleagues and I should be with him when the decision was reached, so that he might make it clear that his loyalty to the Allies and the great cause remained the same, and that it would be only *force majeure* and the desire to do the best he could to support the chosen Government of his beloved country which would induce him to resign.

Then suddenly, almost dramatically, the blow fell. Confirmation of the decision of the Government arrived. He took off his epaulettes, the emblem of his long and faithful service in the army, and slowly and sadly the train steamed out of the station on its way to the Crimea. There he remained, careless and scornful of German invitations, respected and almost feared by the bad elements in Russia, till he was finally forced to turn his back on his own land and depart for Italy.

The happy memories of him are clouded over by the sadder ones which followed and cut short what should have been a career brilliant to the end. When the victorious Allied troops marched through London, and every Allied flag but Russia's was flying, my thoughts, naturally, perhaps, turned to those

old friends with whom I had served so long and into whose souls that day was entering the bitterness of humiliation and disaster to their beloved country. I left the window from which I was watching the march past, went down to my own room and wrote to the Grand Duke to say that on this day my thoughts turned to him and to those other comrades so many of whom we should never see again—men whose lives should have been spared for a better purpose than that of defending themselves against their own people.

His answer was characteristic and I know he would pardon me for quoting some of his words:

'Vos paroles me sont allées au cœur.

'Vous avez justement apprécié la valeur et l'heroisme des soldats Russes, que j'ai eu l'honneur de commander, et c'est au fond de mon cœur, que je vous remercie d'avoir apprécié à leur juste valeur, ceux qui ont donné leur vie pour la Patrie au nom de l'honneur et de la fidélité.

'Je ressens vivement les émotions que vour avez du éprouver en voyant le retour de vos vaillantes troupes, et je partage cordialement les sentiments qui vous ont animés.

'Je vous serre bien affectueusement la main.'

The next time we met was at Cannes in 1920. I had intended to go over to Genoa to see him, and had just arranged the necessary passport when I received word that he was coming to Cannes. For the first time I saw him in plain clothes, walking down the stairs as I came into his hotel. His face lit up at once, and we sat and talked alone. Such a conversation was of necessity sad and private, but he showed no bitterness, no ill feeling, obvious and terrible regrets, and very sincere friendship.

Never was a more loyal servant to his Emperor, in face of many difficulties; never a more gallant soldier or greater gentleman. What can the future bring him? Those who know him, as I do, can hope but one thing for him—Happiness.

GENERAL ALEXEIEFF

Chief of the General Staff

When I first met Alexeieff he was Chief of the Staff to General Ivanoff, in 1914.

He had served on first joining the army in an infantry regiment, his first campaign having been in 1877-1878, after which he passed successfully through the Military Academy, serving later during the Manchurian war as Q.M.G. and then Chief of the Staff to one of the armies.

He had all the appearance of a professor, with the keenness and alertness of a soldier, an excessively quiet and courteous manner, being rarely perturbed or dismayed, and if he *was*—failing to show it. A real glutton for work, which, to be critical, led to his over-centralising, insisting on seeing personally every telegram that arrived, whatever the hour of day or night, and thus putting such a strain upon himself that the inevitable breakdown finally caused him to take sick leave shortly before the Revolution.

On the appointment of the Emperor as Commander-in-Chief in the field, Alexeieff was made Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

He had received great credit for the early success of the 1914 operations in Galicia when serving under Ivanoff, and confirmed the high opinion held of him when in 1915 he commanded the armies on the N.W. front. To him, indeed, it was due that the Germans got no farther than they did at a time when the Russian armies were so badly crippled by want of munitions and guns.

I have already referred to the high opinion in which he was held by the Grand Duke Nicholas, an opinion which extended pretty well throughout the armies.

His responsibilities, as may easily be imagined, were pretty heavy, the direction of affairs being left so much in his hands that he was Commander-in-Chief in all but name. Failure on his part would react against his Sovereign, and the moment at which he took over the post from Yanuskevich, who had acted up till that time in the same position with the Grand Duke Nicholas, was one of grave danger for Russia, with the enemy almost thundering at the gates of Petrograd.

With all these weighty anxieties on his hands, and constant visits from ministers and other officials, including the naval operations which came indirectly to him, the C.-in-C. being C.-in-C. by sea as well as by land, it was but little wonder that we chiefs of Allied missions found it difficult to reach him when we wanted an interview. We were a large and mixed body, and his fixed determination to let no one answer for him prevented one from opportunities of talking over matters as often as one would have wished.

Probably other Chiefs of General Staffs felt the same about a crowd of Allies hungry for news, and possibly acted in the same way, but when one did accomplish it, I always found him, even at the late hour of the night which was generally chosen for the interview, clear, most friendly and anxious to fall in as far as lay in his power with other views which had to be laid before him.

He was very quiet in manner, spoke low and slowly, and kept as far away as possible from the luncheon and dinner crowd which surrounded the Emperor, preferring a shorter and quieter meal both morning and evening with the Staff Officers' Mess.

It was but rarely that he could get away on a visit to the armies, and until his health failed and his wife joined him he practically lived and slept at his office.

No wonder the strain eventually broke him down for a short period, which he personally would very likely have shortened had it not been for his full confidence in General Gourko and General Klembovsky, who acted for the latter during the inter-Allied conference in 1917.

On his return to Headquarters I went down to the station to meet the man for whom we all had so much respect, and found him looking so much better that one felt cheered by the prospects for the future, but alas! he was hardly back before the trouble ending in revolution began.

There have been various opinions expressed as to his attitude then. It has been said that he should have acted in time to stop it, that he did not show loyalty to the Emperor by remaining on to serve the new Government.

Such opinions are unjust and unfair to a man who unfortunately is no longer able to speak for himself.

My own view of Alexeieff's action at this time is that he did the best to warn his

Emperor of the dangers around the throne, but that, unfortunately, other views overmastered his.

Nothing will alter the opinion I hold that he was loyal to the Emperor throughout, intensely loyal to the Allied cause and to his country. It was, I believe, the Emperor's personal wish that he remained at his post, and continued to do so later as C.-in-C. when the 'no Romanoff' order came into effect.

The continuation of the war till the defeat of the enemy was his wish, his anxiety and, so far as lay in his hands, his determination.

But he found that the master he had to serve later on, Kerenski, imbued no doubt with a desire for victory, but imbued, unfortunately, with an absolutely ignorant idea as to the necessity of stern discipline as a factor to that end, held views with which Alexeieff found himself totally unable to work.

Later on when the opportunity arose to render further service to his country, then suffering in the toils of that Bolshevism which broke the hearts of so many of our loyal Russian Allies, he again took the field.

What had he to gain? People have said that he was not sufficiently loyal to the Emperor. That I do not believe. He fought

to the end, ashamed no doubt that the Russia he loved should give cause for the idea that she had failed her Allies, and to us as well as to his own land I assert that he was loyal to the end.

I only wish that he were still alive to say so himself.

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